

GRANDMA GREY'S WILL.

BY ESTHER SERLE KENNETH.

CHAPTER I.

A flock of pigeons were whirling around and around the gables of old Grandma Grey's house. Almost continually, summer and winter, there was a commotion among the birds, for there might be fifty of them housed in the barn, besides the family of doves in the dovecote, attached to the carriage-house. The white doves were little Prudence Cary's; the pigeons were Grandma Grey's pet property. She had sat at the window of her chamber and watched them for the last six years.

Her chamber was the southwest chamber of the old house, the old square house which Dr. Grey built when he married Grandma Grey in her girlhood. They had been only a month married when the handsome young man died, and in a year Grandma Grey's brown hair was all streaked with silver. Yet no one ever heard her murmur or moan. She lived quietly and elegantly in her great house with two servants only, and made little excitement in the town. She was seldom mentioned, except when the neighbors would say: "Grandma Grey had her house-cleaning last week. I saw Polly and Betty cleaning the windows, and Tom Turner beating the carpets in the back lot."

They grew to calling her Grandma Grey very early. Perhaps it was because she held little voluntary communication with any one excepting children. When she was digging flower-roots in her garden before the house, and humble young mothers or the nursery maids of wealthy families would hold a dimpled baby over the fence to see the roses and prince's feathers, the silent, snowy-haired woman would lay down her trowel and break some flowers for the little child, speaking to it sadly and tenderly, and bidding it call her grandma. And babies always went to her gladly. One could see how she loved them, how her secret yearning was that she had one to call her own.

Time passed on, and the pale face grew paler, and chilly, and wrinkled, and old.

Grandma Grey's title was very appropriate indeed.

She sat alone in her chamber, looking at the pigeons as they crowded on the roofing of the stoop, twisting their brilliant necks and pluming their feathers, and now and then pecking at each other.

"Lettice," said she to the girl who was dusting the room, "did you count the pigeons last night?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Were they all there?"

"Yes, ma'am, and I think the new brood are mating."

"Yes, I have noticed."

Once, forty years before, there had been only one pair of doves to fly from the barn to the south stoop, and Grandma Grey and her husband had watched their cooing and dumb caressing from that very window. Since, not one of the descendants of the pair had been or ever would be permitted by Grandma Grey to be killed, multiplying as they might. No one but herself knew the secret of her fondness for them, but this was it.

Lettice dusted the warm, bright chamber very nicely, put everything in order, hung the duster in the entry nook, and then stood by the door.

"Will you have anything else, ma'am?"

"No."

And Lettice went out with an air of escape. She was a broad-faced, stolid, maternal girl of fourteen, Grandma Grey's niece. Her mother was Grandma Grey's only sister, but they were not sisters in spirit. Maria Morgan had low tastes and vulgar ways, and was selfish and mean of soul. She had married a traveling peddler about the time Grandma Grey had married Dr. Grey. The Grandma Grey was Ellen Carruth. Mrs. Morgan had met with poor fortunes with her drunken husband, and so she had an eye to Grandma Grey's possessions by the way of her daughter Lettice. It was well known that Dr. Grey had left hundreds of dollars at interest when he died, and besides the old Grey house and the large lot of land which lay behind, was a

wharf and a fine block of stores down town. And so, while Maria Morgan had always termed Grandma Grey, with her neat, tasteful ways and gentle precision of manner, "a fussy, finical old thing!" she did not scruple to teach Lettice to angle for her fortune. The Morgans lived in a small house at the back of the Grey estate. When Grandma Grey said, anxiously, one day, "I think one of those ring-tailed doves is missing," Mrs. Morgan privately edged Lettice to say, "I'll go out and count them, grandma." And henceforth Lettice counted the doves every night after they had gone to roost, as a means of propitiating the lonely old lady in her favor. They knew she had strong adhesiveness; what was familiar was dear, and by keeping Lettice intimate in the house, Mrs. Morgan proposed to bring about her ends. She could see that the girl had no attractions for winning her sister's heart. From her infancy she had been stubborn and selfish. The coarse, red face, so utterly void of intellect and sensibility, was quite enough to repulse the delicate old lady in the matter of affection for her niece. The mother knew that she only endured her from a recognized right of kinship, and she did her best to keep this hold as strong as possible. So Lettice was sent in every morning to dust and arrange the invalid's chamber (Grandma Grey was hopelessly lame), which she was capable of doing very well. But she did not bear good grace enough to deceive Grandma Grey. After she flew so readily from the room that day, the old lady smiled a slow, little smile, and then dropped her aged face upon the delicate hands with a little moan. Old, alone, and unloved. It was very bitter. Yet the thought startled her. It seemed to imply some great fault in herself. She thought over her life sadly, and her conscience acquitted her. It was only the fault of circumstances. Her parents, of course, were long since dead; her only sister she could not love, — a whole lifetime of dissimilarity had estranged them; but she knew those with whom she had been connected had never been treated otherwise than with consideration and kindness. Perhaps her manner had repelled friends, but she could not help her silent ways; her heart was still within her. All joyousness of hope and activity of spirit had died out of her life when the worshiped husband of her youth had died. If a little child, to hold against her

bosom and keep her heart warm, had been given her, she might have been different; but as it was, she could only sit sadly alone in her silent chamber and feel to the heart her desolation.

Suddenly the door opened, and a sweet face looked in.

"What will you have for your dinner, Mrs. Grey?" said the cordial young voice of pretty Prudence Cary. She was the housekeeper's niece.

"Come in, child."

So Prudence came in, and the sunlight fell on her golden hair, and healthy bloom, and pretty, rounded figure. She was sixteen, perhaps, with the gravity of her orphanhood settled about her fresh lips, but the innocent, trusting soul of a child looking out of her dark gray eyes.

Grandma Grey looked at her earnestly. Prudence did not notice the gaze as she turned to loop up a curtain that the sunlight might enter more freely, and as she did so she bowed, with a little blush, to some one on the opposite sidewalk. — a young man with a free, light step, and a pleasant face, who was looking up at her. Grandma Grey saw, and forgot about her dinner.

"Forty years ago," she said, dreamily.

Prudence turned her innocent young eyes upon her.

"Did you speak to me?" she said.

"No." Then after a moment: "Polly may send me some broth, Prudence, and a slice of her wheat bread, that is all."

"Aunt's potted pears are done, ma'am. Would you not like to taste them?" said the young girl, lingering. "They are very nice," she said persuasively.

A faint smile stirred Grandma Grey's lips.

"Well, a few," she said, — "and you may bring them up, Prudence."

"Yes, ma'am," said the young girl, cheerily, and tripped away.

Grandma Grey sat alone, and for an hour lived over in fancy her love's young dream. Then came a light step, the door was pushed open, and Prudence came softly in, balancing the light tray where the simple viands were tastefully arranged. She placed it on a small table and wheeled the table to grandma's chair.

"Sit down and wait, child," said Grandma Grey.

The young girl sat down on a little foot-

stool by the window, and gazing into the sunny street, unconsciously commenced, after a moment, humming a light, simple air.

"Prudence," said Grandma Grey.

The young girl looked around with a start.

"What were you singing?"

"I beg your pardon, I did not know that I was singing," said Prudence, with a blush.

"Never mind. What was it?"

"Only a little song called, 'A Maying,' which I learned last spring."

"And where did you learn it?"

"Harry Mathews wrote it, and—and—he taught it to me."

Grandma Grey's falling eyes were not too blind to see the swift, deep blush which covered the pretty cheek.

"And is Harry Mathews your lover, child?"

The sweet young face was bathed in crimson to the brow; but the girl's voice was frank and calm.

"Yes. We are engaged."

"How long has that been?"

"Three months."

"And how old are you?"

"Only a little over sixteen. I am to wait for him." A moment's hesitation—then, re-assured by the kindly face—"Harry is poor, because his father does not like to have him engaged to me, and so will give him nothing to start with. And Harry goes to New York, next week, to learn a printer's trade. He writes songs, and stories, too, and some day he will be an editor, I hope."

"And you will wait for him until then?"

"I don't know. We are going to wait and see how he gets along."

"How old is he?"

"Twenty."

"Yes, there is time enough, child. You have both a whole lifetime before you. It is better that you should not marry now."

Grandma Grey folded her napkin slowly, then said in a kind voice, —

"You may take the tray down now, Prudence."

CHAPTER II.

The winter slipped away, and Lettice Morgan was fifteen years of age. Another year passed, and she was sixteen. She never was and never could be pretty, and

was not and never could be made refined, but she altered upon her maturity and had a shrewd manner of communication which made a very bad sort of wit, and with some she was a favorite. Her mother did her best to get her included in what was the society of Wilton, in hopes of her making a good match. Tom Morgan, the father, Mrs. Morgan persuaded to go into another town to work at his trade of coopering, and once rid of him, the mother and daughter were free to manage matters, so that they were finally included in the invitations to general tea-drinkings, parties, and society-meetings of the town. There Lettice was, to a certain degree, attractive. She was jocose, funny, odd, and though much that was odd about her was really occasioned by her lack of breeding, her grotesque ability claimed her oddities to be the eccentricities of genius. At fairs she was very popular in the post-office department on account of her funny verses, and in the arrangements for any such exhibition she was always counted valuable on account of her practical judgment. As a general rule the girls liked her as a foil to their feminine graces, and the young men sought her when in a rollicking mood and ready for a passage of arms. It could hardly be said that Miss Lettice had any lovers, but she had a number of beaux.

Among those who sought her society was a Mr. Earle Forrester, a lawyer, and a man of polished manners, who was considered something of a catch by match-making parties. He had a slight, elegant figure, regular features, a pale complexion, and unexceptionable black whiskers. His make-up really had a nice effect, but a physiognomist would have viewed with aversion the high, narrow forehead which rose above his keen black eyes.

But Miss Lettice did not happen to be acquainted with physiognomy, and she admired Mr. Forrester. More, she believed herself in love with him. After one or two interviews, at which he drew the young lady into what he termed "showing herself off," she became infatuated with him. She sought every gathering, and the houses of his visiting set, most assiduously, for the sake of mating him. It became her aim to win him, to which interest her mother also lent all her powers.

To mother and daughter, Grandma Grey became more than ever a special object of interest. With her lay the hopes of the

Morgans. Acknowledged as her heir, Lettice Morgan's designs would almost certainly be accomplished. Earle Forrester could hardly be expected to marry a girl without money or beauty, however amusing, but with fifty thousand dollars Lettice was shrewd enough to know he would be able to find her sufficiently attractive to offer for her acceptance his elegant person. She had no objections to his taking such a view of the matter. She knew that he was not wealthy, and she had no doubt that he wished to improve his fortunes with his marriage; for which, in her case, she had only the wish for the means of gaining this end.

And Grandma Grey, sitting alone in her chamber, engaged only with her thoughts and her needlework, gradually became aware of all this. It was hinted that Lettice was in danger of having her whole life blighted from an unfortunate attachment to a man of better position than herself. Unfortunate because she had no acknowledged prospects.

Grandma Grey kept silent for a long time. She would not come to the relief: she gave no golden hopes to the broken-hearted maiden.

Little change had taken place in Grandma Grey's house during the past year. Old Polly Davy was still housekeeper, and Betty Turner did the work. Pretty Prudence may have grown a little graver, for her lover was away, and toiling hard for the first step in life; but she had the same light step and summery bloom and innocent eyes. The house bore the same quiet neatness, and the pigeons and white doves still gathered upon the roof of the stoop in the sunshine.

One day Mrs. Morgan and her daughter sat in Grandma Grey's room, Mrs. Morgan knitting socks which she privately sold to the stores to eke out the income required for Lettice's wardrobe. The young lady sat at the window watching the people in the street, and hoping Earle Forrester would go by, that she might bow to him from Grandma Grey's window. She was silent, but her mother talked incessantly.

"Lettice, dear," she said at last, "do you see Mr. Forrester go by?"

"No: but his office-boy has just passed," said Lettice, who was stretching her neck to look after the lad.

Mrs. Morgan sighed.

"If we were only rich, Lettice," said she,

"I should take you away for change of scene. This attachment is wearing upon you. Your red merino is n't half as tight as it was."

To this suggestion Grandma Grey said quietly, —

"I think Lettice always has her clothes made too tight."

"I hate the dress, anyway!" exclaimed Lettice, who was in a very bad mood. "It's just the color an organ-grinder's monkey wears."

"Beggars must n't be choosers, Lettice. Grandmother Morgan gave it to you, you know. Grandmother Morgan is naturally one of the most generous people in the world. If she were only rich, I am sure you need never break your heart for a man of better position than yourself. She would have promised to make you her heir long ago."

To this Grandma Grey made no reply. She only raised her head, and looked mildly over her spectacles at Lettice, who, with her blowzy bloom and one hundred and forty avoirdupois weight, did not look much as if her heart, or any other of her organic arrangements, were in fatal danger.

Suddenly Grandma Grey spoke: —

"I should think Lawyer Forrester would suppose that I would remember you in my will, Lettice," she said.

Mother and daughter turned breathlessly.

"Ah! but Mr. Forrester is a lawyer, Sister Ellen, and lawyers are always so wary. He can't afford to marry poor, and so can't take the risk of mere expectations. If he only knew that you have made your will in Lettice's favor!"

"I have not yet made my will," said Grandma Grey.

Another breathless moment.

"When I do, I shall remember Lettice," said the old lady.

"Yes: but ought n't you to have made it before?" asked Mrs. Morgan eagerly. "Why, if you should be struck with palsy tonight, Lettice would n't get a cent!"

Mrs. Morgan seemed to have no perception that this speech was the very acme of selfishness, but it brought a faint flush to Grandma Grey's thin cheeks. The next moment she spoke, in a clear, firm voice: —

"I will send for Lawyer Forrester tomorrow, and have him draw up my will," she said. "Will that satisfy you, Maria?"

"Oh, yes. Of course he'll know then

what Lettice will be worth, and there 'll be no doubt that he 'll offer himself right off, for of course you 'll calculate to leave the bulk to Lettice, Ellen."

It was a picture for Dickens. The pale, aged gentlewoman, with her thin cheek growing rapidly a deeper crimson with the flush of wounded sensibility; the sharp-featured, hungry-eyed sister leaning forward in her seat, forgetting the work in her fingers; the blowzy, open-eyed young lady drinking in every word of the financial conversation which was to determine her success in getting a husband. *Her gray eyes, small and sharp, read something of the shrinking of the old lady's delicate heart, but she was too greedy of soul to care for anything but her own success, and too desperately eager to be cautious.*

"Say!" she said sharply, "you 'll leave it all to me, won't you?"

Grandma Grey's lip broke from her nervous compression, and quivered like a child's; and her faded blue eyes flashed and sparkled through tears, but she bowed her face upon her hands, and hid it all. They thought she was meditating.

She looked up at last, pale, and with a strange, icy tone in her voice.

"I will make a will, and leave every cent of my possessions to Lettice," she said; "and Lawyer Forrester shall draw it up."

Mother and daughter looked at each other exultantly. Grandma Grey held her still, pained face over her work. Oh! if there had been some loving son or womanly daughter to draw that aged head to the rest of a tender breast, and let her weep away the shock of emotions which chilled her soul to despair! But she could only weep aloud when they had left her, — weeping in a way which would have called compassion into the soul of any but the women who left her. Lettice had made a feint of kissing her affectionately when she went away; but as she passed beneath the window, she exclaimed, in all sincerity, forgetful, in her excitement, that the chamber windows were open that sunny day, —

"Fifty thousand dollars, ma! Well, if she leaves me all that, I 'll never begrudge all the waiting on I've done for the old thing!"

And Grandma Grey heard.

The next morning, as early as nine o'clock, Mrs. Morgan called Lettice to the window to see Lawyer Forrester's buggy

standing before the side door of Grandma Grey's house.

That evening Mr. Forrester called to take Lettice to drive, and great was the secret jubilate thereof. Lettice's prospects were settled.

CHAPTER III.

New York was thirty miles from Wilton. It might as well have been the distance to China, to Prudence, for she saw Harry but once a year. He was working very hard; had given himself but one week's vacation since the commencement of his labors. In a year and a half he had made himself well acquainted with printing and the publishing business, and now he proposed to start a newspaper in one of the small towns in the western portion of the State.

But he was cramped for means. This difficulty he confided to Prudence, who was his only confidant. Girlish as she looked, she had a steady head and a deep heart, and she studied day and night to know how Harry could be aided to the two hundred dollars which he needed to complete the sum necessary.

And thinking so much made the light step a little slower, and the crimson cheek a little paler, till at last Grandma Grey said, —

"Are you well, Prudence?"

Prudence was fanning her. It was a hot August evening, and Grandma Grey had been made faint by the oppressive atmosphere, and had lain down.

"Oh, yes, I am well," Prudence answered; but Grandma Grey only looked closer at the grave young face.

"Then you must have something on your mind, child," she said at last.

The kind words won Prudence to a full and free confession.

"I had thought," said the girl, "but I did not dare to ask you — I had thought that if you would loan Harry the money, that I would do anything in the world for you — and he will surely pay it back just as quick as he gets settled in business. Not that he ever mentioned it; it was only my own thought, when I remembered how kind you were to Tom Syke's little children last winter" —

"I will lend the young man the money, Prudence," said Grandma Grey. "You've always been a good girl here," she added.

The next day Harry Mathews was inexpressibly relieved and encouraged by the re-

ception of a two-hundred-dollar bank-note, loaned on the easiest terms. And the bloom came back to Prudence's cheek, and the elasticity to her step. The best possible news came weekly from Harry, and Grandma Grey was ever after a deity in her eyes.

And, indeed, Grandma Grey seemed to take the kindest interest in the young lovers. She would let Prudence chat of Harry by the hour, and would ask to have his letters read to her. Perhaps Grandma Grey was getting childish, but it was a childishness which had the happiest effect upon the spirits of the poor, lonely, waiting little Prudence. At last there came a letter from Harry which Prudence read with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes:—

"DEAR LITTLE PRUDIE,—You're the best little girl who ever waited for a poor fellow, and I've something fine to tell you. Yesterday I was fagging at the case, helping get the paper up, for we had n't hands enough, when a great burly fellow, in broadcloth and gold specks, marched into the office, and asked for me. I thought he'd come to order a dozen files, he looked so important, and I put down my stick, wishing I looked more professional just then; but he told me not to stop work for him, and came and stood beside the case and talked for an hour. He said I was the first one who had made a paper go in this town, and three others had tried it before me. That shows I've a talent for the business, don't it? Well, he proved himself a jolly old fellow, though I could n't find out, for the life of me, who he was. But the best I've yet to tell you. He went to the desk as he passed out, and laid something down. I thought it might be his card, and went to look at it as soon as he was out at the door. It was a five-hundred-dollar check! He had given it to me out and out. Who says that the days of miracles have gone by? I can't find out who he is, to save me, and no one else has any idea. Is n't it a joke, Prudie? It's a joke which makes my eyes water, for I've been having a harder pull than ever you knew. Now I can fit up a nice little sanctum, and pay up one or two debts that have been wearing upon my peace of mind for a month. I'm your light-hearted old

"HARRY."

Prudence looked up at Grandma Grey, laughing through her tears.

"Dear Harry! and, oh! how kind it

was!" she exclaimed. "I'll never say that everybody is selfish again. Why, my heart swells up so with gratitude that I can hardly breathe!"

"No, all the world is n't selfish," said Grandma Grey, with a quiet smile.

At the house of the Morgans preparations were commenced for the marriage of Lettice and Mr. Forrester. The desirable catch had been caught. The elegant Earle Forrester, who was to give style to Miss Lettice's fortune, had proposed, and, as it is unnecessary to say, been accepted. They were to be married, and go to the White Mountains, and while they were gone Mrs. Morgan was to pester Grandma Grey into the settlement of a house upon them. She had already provided Lettice with her wedding wardrobe.

And Lettice was married, and went away with her husband. It is hoped that she was happy.

Meanwhile Mrs. Morgan commenced the meditated attack upon Grandma Grey. The old lady met it with firm dignity.

"I have done all I shall do for Lettice before my death," she said; and Mrs. Morgan turned away, baffled and enraged. She was feverish with the flush of her gratified ambitions, and the success of Lettice's marriage danced like champagne in her head. She was in no state to brook the refusal she met with, and in her heart she wished her sister already dead.

Unconscious of the evil passions stirring like serpents in her sister's breast, Grandma Grey was watching the happiness of pretty little Prudence. Harry Mathews had come to see her, and, if he continued to succeed, it was imparted to Grandma Grey in confidence that they hoped to be married in the spring. Harry's young face was full of the noblest and purest manhood, and Grandma Grey seemed to take a marvelous content in watching them together.

Alone in her humble home, which would noways hold her growing ambitions, Mrs. Morgan fumed inwardly. She had gone from her sister in a passion, and, with said passion noways abated, she remembered with glowing anger the old, sad, faded face which had met hers so firmly when her request received its complete refusal.

"She is old enough to die," muttered Mrs. Morgan, with absent, gleaming eyes. "How much might be done with her money now idle! And it is Lettice's by right now."

"Fire! fire! fire!"

The ringing cry startled all the sleeping town. It was midnight. There was no moon, and no gleam of light when the people first sprang from their beds and gazed anxiously from doors and windows.

But soon a lurid glow told the story. The old Grey house was afire.

There was instantly great commotion. Everybody turned out, and in the hurry and rushing to and fro they ran against each other in the dark streets. The engines rattled to the scene, and immediately there was a great crowd about the burning building.

The fire had done a ruthless work inside before the crashing windows and gaping apertures told of its dangerous progress. The flames and smoke rushed forth, and were greeted with a cry of excitement by the crowd.

"Is anybody in there?" was the question. And immediately following it was the cry, "Old Grandma Grey! She can't walk a step! Has anybody seen her?"

And, as if anticipating the silence which followed, there was a rush for the ladders.

"Don't go in! don't go in!" came in a shrill cry. "She is in my house."

The men drew back, blackened and scorched. But one pair of terrified eyes was searching out the woman who had said, "She is at my house. Don't go in!"

The south wall gaped, and a rush of flames shot out. The light showed the faces of Mrs. Morgan and Prudence Cary plainly to each other. Such wild, guilty eyes as the girl looked into!

"Woman, you did not tell the truth!" she cried. "My God, men! Grandma Grey is in the house."

She wrung her hands in agony, for the men, aghast and bewildered, made no movement for the ladders. Heavenly Father! was it too late?

"Save her! save her!" shrieked every woman in the crowd.

There was a jostling in the crowd, — a tall, slight form sprang upon a ladder.

"Harry!" cried Prudence, and fainted.

The sight of such heroism rallied the old firemen. They followed the light, deft figure, which was already lost in the smoke and flames.

The roar, the crackle, the pumping of the engines, and the rushing of water went on.

The tiles snapped ablaze to the ground, and the air was dense with the heavy smoke, illuminated by the glitter of the sparks. But a breathless hush had fallen upon the crowd. The men, pale and fierce-eyed, worked madly but silently at the pumps. No one else stirred. The living, breathing, expectant mass waited like one man for the appearance of the brave fellow who had gone into the fiery furnace of the old Grey house to save its aged mistress.

Moment after moment passed. They did not come. The respirations of the people came hard and sorely. Another moment. *Heavens! such waiting was horrible.*

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" A shout broke from the crowd.

A figure appeared upon one of the ladders, — a man — Harry Mathews — burdened, too!

"Hurrah!" they shouted again.

They rushed up to meet him, and took from his trembling arms the aged form, frail, and light in weight, but cumbersome in its wrappings from the bed. She was safe — dear, old, helpless Grandma Grey!

They laid her upon mattresses, and carried her to the nearest house, and the burning building burned to the ground. As its walls fell in, some one cried, —

"Who said that Grandma Grey was in her house?"

Every one looked about them with a new sense of horror. A woman slipped from the edge of the crowd, and the door of the Morgan house silently opened and shut. Some saw; some did not; but surely God did. And Maria Morgan had shut herself in alone with her own conscience.

There was a season of rest for the crowd, but at the dawn they were awake to the excitement of the night before. They gathered around the blackened ruins of the old Grey house, and talked over the events of the night.

Prudence was with Grandma Grey, at the house of Lawyer Hurle, an old friend of the old lady. Harry Mathews went there too, and tried to laugh away the agitation of the aged face; but he bowed his bright head reverently under the blessing which fell from the trembling lips. Prudence had not slept in the old house the night before, or the dangerous rescue might not have been needed. She was away on a visit a short distance from her home.

They made the best of the matter, and

thought that all was going smooth again, but the state of Grandma Grey was soon forced upon their notice. The shock and excitement had been too much for her strength; she was falling fast.

Prudence seemed nearest to her of all the world. Like an own child, she laid her tear-wet face on the pillow, and sobbed,—

“What shall I do without you, dear Grandma Grey? You have been so kind to me! Don’t die and leave us! We will take such good care of you, Harry and I.”

Grandma Grey put her thin hand on the golden head.

“But I am glad to go, child,—I am glad to go,” she said faintly, and with a strange look of joy upon her face. Her eyes were closed. Perhaps even then she saw the face she had yearned to see for forty years. In an hour she died.

Her body was buried with great care and ceremony. All the town did her reverence. Little children were brought to put flowers on her bier. Her loving little handmaiden and Harry Mathews wept as for a mother.

Maria Morgan was there, alone, apart, deeply veiled. Hawthorne would have said that there was something weird about her in the eyes of the people, that they shrank from her, and whispered apart.

Lettice and her husband were not there. It was not known exactly where they were, and neither letter nor telegram reached them in time for their attendance at the funeral; but they were there when the will was read.

There had been great fear that the will was burned in the house, but old Lawyer Hurle, appearing from New-York City, said concisely that the will was safe; a remark which filled with sudden vague apprehension his ingenious brother lawyer, Mr. Earle Forrester.

When Lawyer Hurle made his appearance, Harry viewed him with astonishment. Burly, and with a good-natured importance, dressed in the finest of broadcloth, and with the goldenest of golden-bowed specks, Mr. John Hurle was none other than the visitor who had favored him with a check for five hundred dollars. Harry forbore to express his emotions.

The will was produced and read.

“I wonder if Grandma Grey did not remember you, Prudie?” whispered Harry.

Prudence shook her head in surprise.

The family were soon assembled, and in waiting silence, and Lawyer Hurle read the

will, which he proved to be at the request of the deceased.

First of all, the servants were provided with a life annuity. Then Mrs. Morgan had fifty dollars assigned her “for decent mourning to be worn for an only sister. The house in which I have always resided I bequeathe to my niece, Lettice Morgan; and all else of my possessions I bequeathe, without reserve, to my loving and true-hearted little handmaiden, Prudence Cary, to be held in her right by the guardian whom I shall appoint.” And John Hurle was appointed guardian.

There was an ominous silence; then Earle Forrester exclaimed that the will was false. He had himself drawn up another. Lawyer Hurle showed him the date of the article he held, which was that of a few weeks previous to Grandma Grey’s death. Of course the first one was void, if it had not been burned, as it was.

So the Morgans received their just deserts, and little Prudence Cary came to good fortune. Grandma Grey had furnished Lettice with a wedding wardrobe and a house, and, on the strength of more, a husband. The house was burned, the wardrobe wore out faster than the owner, and the elegant lawyer cursed the fate which left him in such a predicament,—the flower of his youth and beauty wasted upon the uncongenial soil of Miss Lettice’s nature. How the house came afire was never revealed, but Maria Morgan went to her death-bed with more than one secret sin upon her troubled soul. She wasted faster than sickness could waste her as she lay there. If the crime of murder came near her soul, let us trust that she worked out of great suffering, pardon, and absolution.

Pretty little Prudence became as a daughter to old John Hurle, who was childless. He learned, and very easily, to love Harry also as a son. The strange visit was at Grandma Grey’s request, and the check her secret provision. She had long ago taken the young lovers to her lonely heart, and through their goodness they were prospered, as good lovers always are. They were married that fall, and Harry Mathews is now one of the wealthiest publishers of New York. And there is a young Harry growing up, as manly and good as his father; and a little Prudence, walking in the faithful, loving footsteps of her mother; and I might add many other blessings.

HARD TIMES.

BY MARY FRANCES WILLIAMS.

Dick Sedgwick whistled cheerily as he walked briskly down the street, his handsome head well up, his bright, manly young face set square against the wind and rain, and his brown eyes glowing warm under the slouching brim of his hat. There was something alert and cheerful in the very turn of his wrist as he fitted a latch-key in the door of a plain, respectable house, which indicated by the number of its door-bells that it belonged to the "tenement" class.

Dick lived on the second floor, evidently, for he went up one flight of stairs, and entered a cozy little room, in the centre of which a small round table was set for two.

As Dick stepped in, closing the door behind him, another door opposite, which stood slightly ajar, swung open at the touch of a dainty little foot, and there entered the prettiest of pretty girls, bearing in one hand a shining pewter tea-pot, and in the other a plate of smoking rolls.

Dick's sister, you might see at a glance; for the resemblance between them was very plain. She had the same light, free step, with an added touch of feminine grace; the same fine, regular features, notably the perfect mouth; the same brown eyes and curling brown hair,—the latter a shade darker than Dick's. It was a real delight to look at her, so dainty in her form, so graceful in all her movements, so girlish, yet so womanly. Her very dress was like her,—delicately neat and tasteful; a gown of some bright, woolen fabric, cut in a coquettish style which suited her exactly, a white ruffled apron, with cunning little pockets, a snowy ruffle at her throat, and a blue ribbon tying back her chestnut-brown curls.

"Why, Dick, you are late," said she, as she set her appetizing burden upon the table, and came to help him off with his overcoat. "What has kept you so long?"

"I have been working at Judge Calderon's today, and it is a rather long walk from there; besides," said Dick, "it is a bad night. Have I kept you waiting, pussy?"

"Not long: I was late with my tea, too,"

she answered, wheeling her brother's favorite chair up to the table, and pouring his tea.

"What were you doing at Judge Calderon's?" she inquired, as Dick took his place, and attacked the viands with an evident appetite.

"Fixing up the window-casings," Dick answered. "Tomorrow I am to commence putting folding-doors between the two parlors. Then there are to be extensive alterations in the south wing, and the chambers are to be remodeled a little. Probably I shall be employed there for several weeks."

"What is the reason of all that?" queried his sister, who had great interest in all of Dick's operations.

"The house is old-fashioned, you know," said Dick; "and, as Miss Calderon has just returned from Europe, I suppose the modernizing is on her account."

"O Dick!" cried his sister eagerly, "have you seen Miss Calderon? and is she as handsome as they say?"

Dick took a drink of tea before replying. Perhaps it was hot, which might account for the added color in his face as he replied,—

"I have seen her several times. She is beautiful as an angel."

"How does she look? Is she dark or fair? Has she haughty ways, like the Judge? or is she?"—

"There, Rosie!" laughed Dick: "that will do for once. I can't possibly remember your questions long enough to answer them if you add any more to the list."

"Now don't tease me, Dick, there's a good boy," coaxed Rosie. "Be good, and describe Miss Calderon, please. I want to know all about her."

"Describe her?" mused Dick. "I don't know that I can."

But it was singular what a soft light filled his brown eyes, and how tender his voice became.

"She is not very easy to describe," he continued; "but, if I were an artist, I could paint her portrait from memory. She is tall and slender, and stately as any queen."

but sweet and gracious too. Her face is heavenly,—like that, Rosie: she reminds me of that picture."

Dick pointed to a good engraving of Correggio's most beautiful Madonna, which was one of the few pictures on the walls of the little parlor.

Practical Rosie surveyed the exquisite face with as critical an air as if it really were Miss Calderon's portrait.

"What sort of hair has she?"

"Black," said Dick, "with a purple shade in the light; and she wears it in a great coil twisted around the back of her head, with one of those wide braids across the front, just above her white forehead"—

"A coronet braid, you mean," promptly supplemented his sister.

"Yes, it looks like a coronet," said Dick dreamily.

And his face took such a glow as hot tea could scarcely have brought into it.

"And her eyes! they are not black, as you would expect, but blue,—a deep, clear, *real* blue; and they have just the expression of that Madonna's eyes."

Rosie looked rather dubiously at the picture as she answered,—

"She must have a strange expression, then. That picture does n't look like a real, live person: it is more like a— a saint, or an angel; or a sort of dream."

"So does she,— Miss Calderon, I mean," said Dick.

"Do you know what her name is?" asked Rosie.

"Yes: I have heard the Judge call her by name,— Eudora."

He uttered the word as if it were sacred; and a deep flush suffused his face, to the very roots of his curly brown hair.

Just then there was a warning tap at the door, and Dick arose, and went to open it. He admitted a tall, dark young man of twenty-five or twenty-six; and the cordial manner in which they greeted each other as "Dick" and "Charley" showed that they were friends. The scarlet deepened in Rosie's cheeks, and her welcome was shy as well as tender. Then she brought another plate and teacup, and made a place at the table for the new-comer. His manner plainly showed that it was no new one to him.

This young man was remarkably handsome, and his elegant bearing would have fitted a prince; but Charley Seagraves was

only a wholesale-drygoods clerk, on a very poor salary. He was Dick Sedgwick's bosom friend, and he was Rosie's lover. Although as yet there was no formal engagement between them, yet each knew the other's love; and Charley only waited, to declare it, until he should have saved enough to provide a home for his bride when she was won. The promise of an increased salary had lately brought that prospect near; and Dick was as glad as his friend. He could not have chosen one to whom he would more willingly have intrusted the happiness of his beloved sister; for he knew that Charley was steady, honest, and thoroughly good-hearted, and Dick honored him all the more because he would not speak to Rosie of his love until he could couple the declaration with the offer of his hand and a home.

For nearly a month Richard Sedgwick was employed at Judge Calderon's house; and, day after day, Rosie became aware of an ever-increasing change in her brother. It was not that he was less thoughtful of her welfare, or that his brotherly affection seemed any less tender. On the contrary, he had never been so kind, so gentle, and so lovable. But he, who had once been so overflowing with fun, and always rather noisy and boyish in his merriment, grew strangely quiet, and became addicted to reveries at times when pensiveness was not at all to be expected of him.

Rosie thought his reveries must certainly be pleasant ones, because of the dreamy smile that seemed forever hovering upon Dick's lips in these latter days. But there were times when his look was sad, and heart and brow alike were heavy with the strange new burden which had fallen on him.

And at last the truth came out. The brother and sister were again discussing their pleasant evening meal, over which all their little confidential chats took place. Dick was disposed to be thoughtful; but Rosie, who chanced to be in an uncommonly loquacious mood, was determined to make him talk.

"Dick," she said, after chattering about everything else that she could think of,— "Dick, do you expect to work much longer at the Judge's?"

Dick looked up with a sudden start. His face became very grave, and he gave a long sigh, as he answered,—

"No, dear: I shall get through with the job tomorrow."

"I am glad of it," declared Rosie.

"Why?"

"Because you must have had very hard work there. You come home every night as still and sober as a deacon; and you just get into a corner, and there you sit, without a word to say. You act as if you were completely tired out, you poor dear!"

Dick answered nothing; but he sighed again, long and heavily.

"Are you tired tonight, Dick?" asked his sister gently.

"No, Rosie; not very."

"What ails you, then? Something is the matter: I can see it plainly enough. You have had something on your mind this long time."

Rosie left her place, and came around to Dick's side of the table, when she put her arms around his neck, and laid her soft cheek against his, as she whispered, in loving accents, —

"What is it, brother dear? Tell Rosie, please."

She felt the tremor that shook his strong frame like a sob; and, lifting her head, she looked into his eyes, and saw that they were wet.

"Dick," she cried, with a scared face, "are you in trouble?"

"I don't know, — yes, — no! it is not trouble: I am not sorry for it," Dick stammered.

"For what?" queried Rosie, opening her eyes wide at this puzzling answer.

"Don't ask me, Rosie."

Dick's face was averted from her sight, and his voice was firm enough; but Rosie saw the hot red sweep over the little of his cheek and brow that she could see, and a suddenly enlightened look came into her eyes. Bending close to Dick's ear, she softly whispered, —

"You need not tell me, Dick: I can guess your secret."

"What do you think?" —

"Dick, you love Eudora Calderon."

Then there was a long silence. At last it was broken by Rosie.

"Am I right, brother?"

"You are right, Rosie. I do love Eudora Calderon."

The truth was out, and Dick was glad that Rosie knew it. He had never kept a secret from her, yet he had not felt that he

could tell her this one; but he was glad that her quick wit had discovered it, and saved him the telling.

"How long have you loved her, Dick?" asked Rosie.

"Ever since the first time I saw her," said Dick energetically.

"Does she know it, Dick?"

"No," cried Dick bitterly. "She never will know it. I would cut my tongue out before I would tell her."

Rosie stared.

"Well, of all the men!" —

"Don't you see that I cannot tell her?" interrupted Dick impatiently. "There is an obstacle between us that will keep my lips forever sealed. I could never ask Eudora Calderon for her love."

"What is it that prevents?" asked his sister.

"It is Miss Calderon's fortune."

"Will you let that come between you and your love, Dick?"

"If I were rich, and she poor," replied Dick sadly, "I should long ago have asked her to marry me. But she is rich, and I am poor; and I would die first."

"But, Dick," Rosie suggested, looking at him intently, "suppose she loves you in return?"

"If I knew that my love was returned, it would be all the same," he said: "I would not offer it."

And Rosie said no more. She knew the stern pride which would hold Dick to that resolve, though it darkened his whole life. Eudora Calderon was the richest heiress in the State, and Richard Sedgwick would die before he would ask her to be a mechanic's wife. Love was strong with him, but pride was stronger yet.

So he left the Judge's, and went elsewhere to work; and as the spring-time passed into summer, and the summer reached its fullest tide, and then began to wane, he worked as he had never worked before, striving by desperate labor to drive away his grief. But it was a hopeless struggle; for he would not, if he could, have forgotten the strong love out of which that grief arose.

The autumn came, — that fateful autumn of "the panic," when the financial sky was full of forebodings, and the dread of "hard times" was in everybody's mouth: but it was not, as some supposed, the apprehen-

sion of need in the coming winter that urged Dick to such remorseless labor. He had no fear of that: he knew that there would be employment for him, whatever happened; and the savings of his frugal industry were so safely invested that he had no fear of loss. His chief anxiety was for Charley Seagraves; for he knew how bitter would be the disappointment to his friend if his union with Rosie had to be again postponed.

For Charley had spoken, and Rosie was now his betrothed wife. They meant to be wedded at Christmas; and perhaps, when Dick beheld their mutual happiness, he had some bitter thoughts,—not envious, for he loved them both, and was glad for them; but perhaps the belief that such love was not for him deepened his pain into something that was very like despair. Perhaps; but, if so, Dick was thoroughly a man, and never let them know it.

One day, Dick and Rosie visited a photographer's rooms, and sat for some pictures. Rosie was very much concerned lest she should not get a good likeness for Charley; but when her sitting was over, and the knight of the camera brought forth half a dozen copies of her pretty face, and submitted them for inspection, Dick declared them perfect, and his sister was in ecstasies.

Then it was Dick's turn to sit. He was not in the least concerned, and the taking of his "counterfeit presentment" was very quickly accomplished.

The photographer disappeared, with the pictures, into his chemical room; and, at the same moment, a young lady in a stylish walking costume entered the gallery.

Rosie's attention was attracted by the opening of the door, and, instantly upon the lady's entrance, became centred upon the "lovely suit" she wore, so that she failed to observe her brother's actions. Consequently she was surprised to see the new-comer glance carelessly in their direction, and then stop suddenly, turning first white, and then red, and to see her finally come toward them, with a look half of timidity, and half of determination.

Rosie looked at her brother. He had risen from his seat, and took a step forward to meet the lady. His pale face told his sister, before a word had been spoken, who the beautiful stranger was.

"This is a fortunate accident," said the lady as she advanced toward Dick. "I

hope you are not sorry to meet me, Mr. Sedgwick."

"Miss Calderon"—

Dick could not speak another word. That little hand was clasped in his, and he was quite unconscious of the passionate pressure with which he held it.

"Why is it so long since we have seen you, Mr. Sedgwick?" she asked reproachfully. "We thought you would call and see us occasionally."

"I have been very busy, Miss Calderon. A working-man has very little time for making calls."

In the stern effort to repress his feelings, Dick's voice sounded very cold; and Eudora was hurt by its tone. She drew her hand away from him, and glanced at Rosie.

"My sister Rosalie, Miss Calderon," said Dick.

The firm fingers of the heiress closed warmly over little Rosie's, and the pleading tone was in her voice again as she said,—

"You are not like a stranger to me, Rosalie Sedgwick. Your brother has often talked to me about you. I hope we may be friends."

Rosie answered, with a quiet dignity that became her very well, little lady that she was, for all her humble station,—

"I should be very well pleased to know you as a friend, Miss Calderon. You know that Dick and I are not likely to meet you often; but, if you care to call on me at home, you will be very welcome."

She looked at Dick as if she expected him to endorse what she said. But he coldly remarked,—

"I fear Miss Calderon will not find much attraction to so poor a place, Rosie."

"But I intend to come, Mr. Sedgwick," said Miss Calderon.

She spoke with a gayly defiant air; but Rosie noticed the quick, pained shutting of her lips, and gave Dick a reproving look. She thought he was making himself unnecessarily savage. But no more was said, for the photographer just then made his appearance with several copies of Dick's picture.

Dick examined them critically.

"Pretty fair," was his verdict as he passed them to his sister.

"Oh! splendid!" cried Rosie, in raptures: "Just see, Miss Calderon! are they not good?"

"Very good," said Miss Calderon.

She spoke calmly; but her eyes shone, and a tremulous smile was on her lips, as she regarded the manly face, a counterfeit of Dick's own.

As Dick received the pictures, and gave them back to the photographer to be "finished," along with Rosie's, a sudden whiff of wind came in at the window, and blew them out of the man's hand, scattering them widely over the floor. Rosie stooped to pick up those which were nearest to her, while Dick and the artist gathered up the rest. But, when they came to be inspected, one of Dick's was missing, and no trace of it could be found. Finally Dick gave up the search.

"It is of no consequence," he said.

Rosie saw that Miss Calderon was preparing to submit her own beautiful face to the camera; and, while Dick arranged with the photographer as to the time when they could have their perfected pictures, she remarked, —

"You are going to have some taken, I see."

"Yes," replied Eudora. "Will you exchange with me if I get a good picture, Rosalie?"

"I shall be delighted to do so," smiled Rosie.

And then Dick advanced, with the announcement that their business was concluded.

"Tell me where you live, Rosie," said Miss Calderon. "I am coming to see you soon."

"Number 20, Ball Street, on the second floor," said Rosie.

And she gave her hand to Miss Calderon, at parting.

Eudora's bow to Dick was this time as cold as his own; but, in turning from him, she slightly moved her hat upon the table, and Rosie's quick eye caught a momentary glimpse of something white, half hidden in the folds of the gray veil. Rosie's wit was as quick as her eye, and she shrewdly thought that something was very like the missing picture. But she kept the thought to herself.

Three days later, Miss Calderon did call at the tenement in Ball Street. Rosalie Sedgwick received her with a very cordial greeting. Rosie had her own private opinion about Miss Calderon's sentiments with regard to her brother; an opinion which did not make her any the less disposed to love

the Judge's beautiful daughter and prospective heiress.

She opened conversation by the hope that Eudora had been fortunate in getting good photographs; and in half an hour the two girls were talking and laughing as if they had been friends for years.

After that, Miss Calderon came again and yet again, and many times, though Rosie never went to the Judge's grand house. Miss Calderon seemed well enough satisfied, and quite content to do all the visiting herself. But, though she and Rosie became so intimate that scarcely a day passed without seeing her at the Sedgwicks', yet she always went away before the hour when Dick came home. Rosie was in raptures with her new friend, and Dick listened with a painful pleasure to her rhapsodies about Eudora; but he had never seen her since the day they had met in the photograph gallery.

"Now, Eudora, you might stay to tea just once," entreated Rosie, one day, when Miss Calderon prepared to take her leave, as usual, just before six o'clock. "Now please do."

"Impossible."

"You always go off before six o'clock," said Rosie accusingly; "and I do believe you run away from Dick."

"Rosie, I think you would have pride enough to run away from a person who had avoided you as persistently as Mr. Sedgwick has avoided me."

"Have you never thought that may be his pride?" hinted Rosie.

"I never slighted him," replied Miss Calderon, with a quivering lip. "He was very pleasant all the while he was working at our house; and, when he left, I positively urged him to call again. Papa invited him too; and he knows we meant it. But he never came near me. I cannot keep away from you, Rosie; for you are the dearest little friend I ever had; but I will not meet your brother unless it is by his own intention."

"Eudora said this with great spirit; but the tears were shining in her eyes, and pretty Rosie's face took on a most resolute expression as she said to herself, —

"This is all sheer nonsense, and I mean to have a decided alteration in the state of affairs."

Aloud she said, —

"Eudora?"

"Well, Rosie?"

"I want to ask you a question."

"Certainly."

"If you knew," said Rosie, "that a man loved you, — a man who was good and noble, but poor; and if you knew, that, because you were a great heiress, while he was only a poor carpenter, he was too proud to tell his love, — what would you do?"

"You are supposing that I loved that man?" murmured Eudora, with averted face.

"Yes. What would you do?"

"I would — wait."

The words came sad and slow, but firm. And Rosalie sighed; for to her, in her own assured and happy love, it seemed a hard doom to wait, while youth and hope passed away together, and all for a foolish prejudice.

The sigh caused Eudora to turn toward her friend; and, just as she turned, a card photograph slipped from the bodice of Rosie's dress, and fell upon the floor. She snatched it up hastily, as if to hide it; but changed her mind, and shyly offered it for her friend to see.

Eudora gazed very thoughtfully at the dark, splendid face, as she inquired, —

"Who is it, Rosie?"

"Charlie Seagraves," answered Rosie, blushing like a veritable rose.

"He is very handsome," Eudora said, giving back the card; "but I can match him well."

And she placed her hand inside her own embroidered sacque, her cheeks on fire, as she said, —

"You know what it means, then, when one carries a man's picture next to her heart?"

Rosie nodded.

"Then — look here!"

It was Richard Sedgwick's face that Eudora showed, — the unfinished photograph which he had lost.

"You darling!" cried Richard's sister, throwing her arms around Eudora's neck in a fervor of delight. "I knew you had it. Oh! if Dick only knew!"

"Rosie?" cried Eudora, alarmed. "You must never tell him."

"But I suppose I may give him a bit of sisterly advice?" suggested Rosie mischievously. "I may just hint that" —

"Rosalie Sedgwick!" exclaimed Eudora, "if you ever dare to give him even the

faintest hint of this, I shall never forgive you."

"But he loves you, Eudora," pleaded Rosie. "He told me so long ago."

"Promise me that you will not tell him," said Eudora firmly.

"I promise," sighed Rosie.

"That's a dear," said Eudora. "You know, if he is too proud to tell me, I cannot propose to him. Can I, Rosie?"

And Rosie could not deny that such a proceeding would be rather inconsistent with her ideas of maidenly propriety.

Half an hour after Eudora's departure, Dick came home, with such a serious and troubled face that Rosie was moved to question him about its cause.

"What is the matter, Dick? You look worried, dear."

"Rosie, has Charley been here this afternoon?" asked Dick, not answering her question.

"Charley? No. O Dick!" cried Rosie, beginning to tremble, "has anything happened to Charley?"

"Nothing has happened — as yet," answered Dick, adding the last words with some hesitation.

"What do you mean?"

"Rosie, dear, I don't see any necessity for concealing the truth from you. Charley dreads to let you know it; but I know you are a brave little girl, and I shall tell you."

Rosie looked at him with wide, frightened eyes.

"The fact is, dear," said Richard, "Charley is expecting to be thrown out of employment."

"Oh!"

Rosie drew a deep breath of relief. Charley was in no personal danger, then. And her little wildly beating heart grew calm again.

Dick saw that she failed to realize all that was meant by his announcement. So he put his arm around her, and drew her close to his side, as he spoke again.

"And, Rosie, I suppose you know why that would be a great calamity to poor Charley just now. He has been looking forward so long to your marriage, dear, and has been so happy to think it was near at last" —

"I see, Dick." And Rosie hid her face upon her brother's shoulder. "We could not be married just now if this should happen."

"No, dear; and the disappointment would be very hard for Charley to bear. He is almost distracted to think of waiting for you any longer. When he comes, Rosie, you must try to cheer him up and comfort him a little."

"Yes, I will," said Rosie, winking away the tears which gathered in her eyes. "If there is no help for it, we shall have to be contented. Charley knows that I love him, and we need not be miserable because we have to wait a little longer, or even" — and her voice faltered a little — "or even a good while longer."

"Rosie, you are a little heroine," said her brother, kissing her fondly. "Charley can afford to wait for such a wife."

"But if Charley should lose his place, Dick, could n't he get another?" questioned Rosie.

"I am afraid not," said Richard. "If you ever read the papers, Rosie, you would know that business is very dull, and work of any kind is very hard to get at present. There is a panic in the financial world, and it is altogether likely that there will be very hard times."

He had hardly ceased to speak when a step sounded at the door, and Charley Seagraves entered. He looked haggard, and his whole bearing told of trouble and disappointment.

"It's all up with me, Dick," he said, as he sank into a chair, overcome with anxiety and weariness.

Rosie went to him, and leaned on his breast, sobbing. Poor child! her heroism was not proof against the sight of his distress. But Dick pressed his hand with a brotherly clasp, and said kindly and cheerfully, —

"Bear up, Charley. Don't be despondent, my dear fellow. Things might be worse, you know."

"I don't know what could be worse," groaned Charley. "Dick, the Franklin Bank is broken."

"Good heavens! Charley" —

"I've lost every cent," said Charley despairingly. "And I've lost my situation too. I was discharged today. If it were not for Rosie, I should go and commit suicide."

"Charley!"

"Forgive me, Rosie. I don't know what I'm saying." And Charley strained her to his heart. "If it were not for you, darling,

I could bear it better. Only two months, and you would have been my wife; and now" —

His voice broke down. Rosalie glanced at her brother; and Dick understood, and went out of the room, leaving the lovers alone together.

Later, when Rosie summoned him to tea, he found Charley much more composed, but still sad and disheartened. It was the first time the three had ever brought sad faces to that little round table.

On the following morning, about ten o'clock, as Rosie was busy with her household duties, and thinking sorrowfully of the unhappy change in her future, lately seeming so bright, she was startled by the sudden and hasty entrance of her brother. His manner was so agitated, that Rosie dropped her broom, and ran to him, exclaiming, in consternation, —

"Why, Dick! what is the matter? Are you sick?"

"No, Rosie," was his reply. "Get your bonnet and shawl: you must go to Eudora at once."

He spoke in tones of the deepest feeling; and Rosie cried out, —

"Don't say Eudora is in trouble too, Dick."

"She is in great trouble, dear. Poor darling! she has lost her father."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes: he died last night, in a fit of apoplexy, consequent upon learning that the Franklin Bank was broken. He was ruined. I heard of it this morning. He lost everything. They say that his house and all his effects must be sold. Eudora is fatherless, friendless, and homeless, all at one dreadful blow."

"No, Dick," said his sister; "neither friendless nor homeless while you and I have a home."

"You are right. She must come to us. You must go and stay with her until after her father's funeral; and then we will bring her home, — poor, desolate girl that she must be!"

The tremor in Dick's manly tones showed how strongly he felt the trials of his beloved.

Rosalie attired herself for the street, while Dick went to exchange his working-clothes for a neater suit; and the brother and sister repaired to Judge Calderon's stately mansion, now closed and darkened, with

drawn curtains and a muffled knocker, from which latter a black crape streamer hung, telling the tale of death.

They were admitted by a hushed-looking house-maid, who said that Miss Calderon was alone in her room, and had not been down to breakfast. There were some friends of the family in the house; but she had not felt able to see them.

Rosalie wrote a few loving words upon a card, and sent it to Eudora; and in five minutes the girl came to say that Miss Eudora would see the lady up-stairs in her room, though she was so unfit for receiving company that the gentleman would excuse her.

Rosie, the moment she saw her friend, threw her arms about her neck, and began to cry.

"I knew you would come to me in my sorrow, dear Rosie," said Eudora, with trembling lips. "I did not want any one else; but I knew you would come."

"I am going to stay with you, darling, until the funeral is over," said Rosie, drying her tears; "and then you must go home with me, and be my sister."

"I shall not have any other home," replied Eudora; "but—your brother—what will he say?"

"You know what he will say."

"Yes, I know: Richard Sedgwick would think all the more of his friends for being in trouble. He came with you, Rosie?"

"He is walking up and down your parlor at this moment," said Rosie, "waiting to see if he can be of any service to you."

"Dear Richard! he will not feel hurt at my not going down, Rosie? I could not bear to see any one but you today."

Rosie protested that Richard would be the last person to annoy her at such a time. And having asked if there was anything that he could do, to which Eudora answered "Nothing," she went down to send him away, promising to return to her bereaved friend when she had done so.

Wise little Rosie did not forget to tell Dick, for his comfort, that Eudora had spoken of him; and Dick went away, not happy, for his darling was in sorrow, but very glad that even in her grief she could think of him, and so tenderly.

So Rosalie remained with her friend in the house of mourning until "all was over." Some of Eudora's wealthy friends offered her a temporary home, "till she

could decide what she was going to do." They were kind, and Eudora was grateful; but their offers of shelter were declined. She had warmer, and dearer friends than they. And, when all that remained of the stately Judge Calderon was borne to its last resting-place, his daughter followed him to the grave, with Rosalie Sedgwick by her side, never to return again to the mansion which was no longer her home. It was a far more humble home that awaited her under Richard Sedgwick's roof; but Eudora found it also a very happy and contented one.

Richard came home from his work, that evening, to find the little parlor which he had left so lonesome brightened up again by Rosie's cheerful presence: and Eudora Calderon was sitting before the fire, dressed in sombre garments; but with the glow of the firelight in her face, and with Rosie's cheery talk sounding in her ears, she looked neither pale nor very sad.

Dick's heart gave a great, tender throb when he saw her sitting there. He went to her at once, and took both her hands in his warm, honest clasp.

"Eudora, this is well," he said. "You have gladdened my heart by this proof of your confidence. And if my devoted love could drive away your sorrow, my poor darling," —

Here Rosalie discreetly left the room; and, smiling through a mist of tears, Eudora looked into her lover's face, and interrupted him.

"No, Richard: I am not poor."

"You have lost your father and your fortune, dearest," said Dick. "But" —

"But I shall meet my father again; and my fortune is well lost, since the loss has gained me your love, Richard."

When Rosie came back with the tea and toast, after staying as long as she possibly could, she found Dick standing before the hearth, and Eudora leaning on his breast. And Dick called to her, in tones of ecstatic happiness, —

"Come here, Rosie, and kiss your sister that is to be."

Rosie enthusiastically obeyed, whispering mischievously at the same time, —

"I did n't tell him, Eudora."

"He needed no telling, Rosie," she smiled.

They were married in a few weeks; and Rosie and Charley, though they had to wait a spell, are wedded now, and happy.

HEIR AND HEIRESS.

BY AMANDA M. HALE.

The mansion house at Moorfields was a grim stone fortress. Its massive, arching doorways, its battlemented roofs, its quaint gargoyles and beautiful oriel windows, were reminiscences of feudal times. An old-fashioned garden fringed it upon one side. Two straightly clipped yew-trees guarded the corners; a hawthorn hedge made the Maydays beautiful with color and fragrance; there were fruit trees *en espalier*, rows of currant-bushes by the walls, and such an opulence of flowers of the sweet, common kinds, that you might haunt its paths from spring to the yellowing autumn, and never miss the scent of lilac, or rose, or mignonette.

But outside the garden walls it was all bare, and bleak, and desolate—wide field beyond wide field sloping slowly to the sea. Westward, there were belts of pine forest, cool, still summer hiding-places of shy flowers, and in winter, full of soft, mild, cathedral gloom, unvisited by the winds that swept the open country, soundless, save for the continuous roar in the tops of the tall trees answering to the slow, grand anthem of the sea. Far away, there was a long, low line of hills that shut out the great world—the world about which the people at Moorfields knew little, and cared not to know.

A singular race of men were the Moors of Moorfield, and the last of the name had become more than half dehumanized, living there alone in his great, lonesome castle, before he brought from the neighboring village the pretty, girlish bride, who graced his stately halls so short a time. That was more than twenty years ago, and Isabel Moor is to-day all alone in the world, with this wild, eery home for her fortune.

Today, the old house is alive with mirth. A troop of girl cousins, one from the neighboring city, two from country homes further inland, and a trio from the village close by,

are come to make the Christmas holidays fly merrily. The quaintly furnished rooms are bright with the beauty that pales the loveliness of the pictured faces on the walls; stately dames in gorgeous brocades and towering headdresses, who look down upon the follies of their descendants with sympathetic smiles.

The halls are festooned with evergreen, and its dewy coolness pervades all the rooms; it drapes the drawing-room, garlands the noble head of Beethoven over the piano, and twines caressingly around the Madonna, who stands with saintly uplifted face. White flowers gleam out from the green gloom, and now, as twilight falls, miniature tapers are lighted here and there, and the effect is like enchantment.

Tomorrow the house will be yet gayer, and Isabel will laugh and sing with the rest. Yet I think in all that wild, desolate country, there is no heart so desolate and sorrowful as hers, for she was, as I said, quite alone in the world.

The sun went down in a red blaze of splendor, dropping out of sight among the clouds tossed and broken by the rising wind, and gleaming like lines of fire along their jagged edges.

Isabel put on her cloak and hood, and stole out unobserved—taking a path across the fields that led toward the sea. Here the great Moorfield rock towered above the plain, and thence one could see the whole waste of gray water, the shelving cliffs along the shore, the broad highway that led out into the world. Isabel drew her cloak snugly around her, and sat down on the brow of the great rock. Her fur-trimmed hood was drawn close about her temples—a white, still face looked out from under it, the soft, amber eyes following the white line of road where it lost its way among the distant hills.

The twilight darkened around her as she

eat there. The house windows all at once threw a red light over the desolate moor. It grew cold. It would be Christmas weather yet. The season would not be defrauded of its own. Looking still wistfully along the distant road, Isabel caught sight of a horseman riding swiftly. That aroused her. If it were only Raleigh! Her cheek flushed, her heart beat with sudden pain. She rose in excitement. But it faded quickly.

"How foolish I am! There is no hope of that."

She went quietly down from the rock and towards home, her face pale and still again. The wind had increased and blew now with a great volume of sound, so that with it and the sigh of the pines, and the swash of the sea, she did not hear the swift-falling hoofs along the path, till they ceased close beside her, and the rider flung himself to the ground. He was tall and bronzed and stately.

"Isabel Moor!" he exclaimed, some strong emotion swaying in his voice.

She stopped short, turning her face towards him. The crescent moon, hanging low in the west, lit its sweet curves and the shreds of fair hair that had escaped from the hood. With a quick impulse, the tall stranger stooped, and kissed her, exclaiming, passionately:

"Have you no welcome for your cousin Raleigh?"

She shrunk away from him, trembling violently, and only finding voice enough to echo:

"My cousin Raleigh!"

"You don't know me, then. I should have known you anywhere!"

The keen eyes that looked down at her had regret and reproach in them, and his voice had grown suddenly quiet and cold.

"How could I? I thought you were far away. I am glad to see you, Cousin Raleigh."

Her beautiful eyes were full of tears, and her tone low and soft with feeling. He bent his head—gave her a searching look.

"You are pale and tired, and perhaps unhappy, too. I shall lift you upon my horse. It is a long walk to the house."

He sat her in the saddle, and walked beside her. It was, the old, sweet tenderness of manner that she did not half appreciate years ago. The sense of being protected and cared for was new and delicious. It was a long time since any one had given

themselves any especial trouble about her. People thought her brave and self-reliant, but they did not know her. Raleigh did, and he let her ride along in silence till she chose to speak.

"So you are come back from India," she said, at last.

"I am come back. Are you glad?"

"I am glad, Cousin Raleigh—you know I have no friend so near as you. The rest are all half cousins."

"You are glad," he said, not heeding the rest of her speech; "and yet there are reasons why you should be sorry."

"What do you mean?" looking at him in surprise.

But her eyes fell under the steady, quiet truth of his.

"I will tell you by and by. The pine wood yonder—is it just as it used to be?"

"Just the same!"

And then they were both silent, for it was walking in the stillness of the pine woods seven years ago, that he first told her his love. Raleigh was brave and true and poor, and his cousin was half in love with Felix Grayman, who wore a uniform and rejoiced in the title of captain, and was besides handsome and gallant and agreeable, while Raleigh, in his common moods, was taciturn and absent, and never otherwise than plain. And then, when upon receiving a quick rejection Raleigh had ventured to remonstrate against the Grayman match, she, in all the pride and passion of her eighteen years, had intimated quite plainly that Raleigh's preference for her was assumed in order to win the wide lands of Moorfield for himself.

She remembered his answer, "Is it possible you can accuse me of such baseness—having known me all your life!" And then he turned and left her, stung to the quick, and she had not seen him until now. And Felix Grayman grew all at once insipid and intolerable, so that she was glad to disenchance him by her coldness. Poor Felix! He was married in three months, to a beauty and a fortune, and now strokes his mustache, and arrays his fine person in an elegant undress uniform in opulent leisure.

Isabel's face burned with humiliation and shame, as she thought of it.

"How could I have been so ignorant—how could I have been guilty of such besotted folly!"

Suddenly, she put her hand upon Ra-

leigh's, where it rested on the bridal rein, saying, impetuously:

"Stop a moment, Raleigh. Once in those pine woods I said something to you which I had no right—no reason to say. I have been sorry ever since. I want you to know that I am. If there was any humiliation I could undergo to show you my regret I would not shrink from it. I don't know what possessed me to wound you so."

After a moment's silence he said, gently:

"It was not your saying it that hurt me—it was your thinking it."

"I did not think it," she cried, vehemently. "I know—I am sure you had no such motive—that—" here it flashed upon her that she was treading upon delicate ground. She broke off, in confusion and tears.

They were now at the house steps.

"There is Gregory," said Isabel. "He will take your horse, and I will speak to Mr. Dixon about your room. You will like your old apartments in the left wing—won't you? We have kept them just as they were when you went away," she said, with a faint smile.

Just as when he went away. She had cared enough for him to do that—poor, lonely child. How he longed to take that lonesome life up to his own heart, and warm it in the sunshine of his love.

Old Gregory came round the corner, stopped quite short at sight of him, and then took off his cap with a confused sense of surprise and delight.

"Bless my old eyes—if it a'n't Master Raleigh—grown such a fine man, too! Who'd 'a' thought it? This will be a Christmas indeed."

"So you keep Christmas in the good old way," said Raleigh, cordially shaking hands with the old man.

"That we do, Master Raleigh. Howsomer, the place is lonesome most times. It needs a master, it does. Miss Isabel don't take to any of the gallants—more's the pity," said Gregory, in pathetic tones.

"Perhaps you don't know," said Raleigh, laughing, as he followed along to the tables.

Old Gregory shook his head.

"Nobody could take away old Gregory's little lamb and he not know it. Master Raleigh, she's the sweetest girl in the country—but she don't take to the gallants," he continued, in a puzzled tone. "The more's the pity."

"Why such a pity?" said Raleigh.

"Moorfields is going to ruin," replied Gregory, solemnly. "Miss Isabel don't understand managing. Mayhap you know something about how things are going on."

"Yes, I know," and Raleigh grew sober.

"If you could help her, Master Raleigh," said the old man, eagerly.

"Perhaps I can—I hope I can." And Raleigh walked gravely away.

Up in her room, Isabel was putting on her gala attire in a strange mood—with a certain carelessness that her eager looks into the mirror belled.

"How strangely I blundered," she said, her face flushing hotly. "I, who pride myself on my self-possession. I just as good as told him that I was sure he loved me once. What tempted me to allude to it. Of course it is all over now. No man could be expected to overlook such an insult as I offered him. Oh, how blind I was!"

She pressed her hand tightly over her eyes to keep back the surging tears, and a low sob made its way in spite of her. By and by, she could go on with her toilet.

"But we won't be wretched—poor, little heart," she murmured, with smiling eyes. "There are plenty of things to be happy about. If we did make a great mistake, nobody shall ever know it—Raleigh Moor shall never know it."

Then she hummed a bit of an old tune:

"Heart, we have been long together—
In rainy and in sunny weather.

If we laugh or if we cry,
Who shall know, and who shall care,
Who our heavy burdens bear?
Only you and I."

The door opened, and Blanche Montgomery sailed in, sweeping a stately courtesy, in tribute to Isabel's grace.

"Pearl silk and mauve trimmings. Quite *recherche!* But don't use those blue flowers, and don't, unless you want to make a perfect fright of yourself, wear those turquoise ornaments. These crimson lilies are just the thing for the dead gold of your hair, and with them you should wear the blood and rubies. Now you are perfect, *ma chere.*"

"Who has come?" asked Isabel.

"Only the two Rawdons and the three Leslies and Harry Miles—boys, all of them," said Blanche, with the contempt of twenty-five for that interesting class.

Isabel laughed.

"'Tis well they don't hear you. But there's one come whom you haven't mentioned, and he isn't a boy."

Blanche's eyes kindled.

"Who?"

"My Cousin Raleigh," said Isabel, the slow color creeping over her face.

"Raleigh Moor?"

"Yes."

Blanche's eyes flashed a dangerous fire.

"He's your own cousin?"

"Yes."

"Was a lover?"

"Was!" returned Isabel, paling a little.

"I understand. Then I am free to make a desperate assault upon him. I've heard of him—gloomy, brave, magnificent. Just the hero I should adore. I'm glad you don't love him now, dear; it would be painful to break your heart." And Blanche gave her a searching look.

"Oh, never mind my heart!" said Isabel, gayly. "That knows how to take care of itself. Come down now and see him."

Down in the lofty, wainscoted parlor, cool and fresh and beautiful with its festive wreaths, odorous of pine woods, and all alight with the great, roaring fire that flamed on the hearth, Raleigh Moor sat alone. Like a vision in his reverie, Isabel glided in, welcomed him in set terms to Moorfield, presented her Cousin Blanche, and then, still, quiet and graceful, took her place as hostess.

Presently a tiny, silver-sounding bell rang, and in a moment more, they came thronging in, fair girls with dimpled shoulders, stately belles and young matrons, followed by an escort of gallant gentlemen, who were, as Blanche said, all boys.

And so by twos they went out into the great dining-room, and sat down to supper. Raleigh looked 'across the long table to where Isabel sat, beautiful and quiet, not forgetful of anybody, but scarcely mingling in the fun that soon grew furious.

There were toasts drank in fun and in earnest. By and by Blanche lifted a glass in her lily white hand:

"Here is to the mistress of Moorfields," and Isabel touched the Bohemian glass to her pretty lips, and smiled, and bowed her thanks.

"Now," cried Harry Miles, "Let us toast the future master of Moorfields, whoever and wherever he is."

It was done with a great deal of shy jesting—all joining, except Raleigh.

"Your Cousin Raleigh does not join us, Isabel," said Blanche, pointedly.

Isabel colored, but was silent.

"Mr. Moor," said Blanche, in a low, impressive tone, "do you know that magnanimity is a virtue?"

"I think I may have heard something of the kind," he replied, with smiling indifference.

"And yet you don't practice it," and her dark eyes were bent upon him.

"It is just possible you may misinterpret my action," he said, with *hauteur*.

"Misinterpret?"

He made no reply, for Isabel had risen, and waited for him to open the door.

Blanche went back to the drawing-room with Harry Miles, biting her lip with vexation.

"Now we shall have some games, I suppose," said the young man. "I vote for blindman's buff."

"Oh, of all things," cried Blanche, who, two hours ago, had declared she detested games of all sorts. "It will be such a capital revenge to catch my Lord Raleigh at fault," she said, under her breath.

But to her chagrin, my Lord Raleigh declined to be caught at a disadvantage, and Blanche's discontent was at its height, when old Gregory entered, and sought his mistress, speaking to her in a low tone.

"Mr. Beardsby arrived!" exclaimed Isabel, in astonishment.

Mr. Beardsby was a man of business, a gray-headed, plodding lawyer of the Slowcome school, the last man in the world to be found a hundred miles from home on a winter's night, without the best of reasons. It was not strange that Isabel was surprised.

"Yes, ma'am," said Gregory, "he's come, and he wants especially to see you alone."

"Alone!"

A dread foreboding of evil swept over Isabel. In a moment she smiled at it. What had she to fear? She had no dear ones to lose. She moved toward the door. But Raleigh stood in her path.

"Let me see Mr. Beardsby in your stead!"

Isabel looked at him. His face was pale and full of pity for her. Now, indeed, she was terrified.

"O Raleigh, what has happened?"

He drew her out into the entry, tenderly

stroking the little, cold hands that clung to him.

"Let me see him in your stead, Isabel."

The gentleness in his voice thrilled her. In her old, girlish way, she said:

"Something is coming that you dread for me, Cousin Raleigh, but you forget—I have no one to lose. It is some trouble about money, perhaps. That is nothing," and she attempted to move away.

"Don't go!" he said, still detaining her.

"Yes. I must know it, you see—thank you, Raleigh. I had better go now."

"Yes. She must know it. I fear she must," he said, as if forgetting her presence.

They walked along the corridor, and were now opposite the library where Mr. Beardsby was sitting. Hearing voices, that gentleman opened the door, and looked out, made a profound obeisance to Raleigh Moor, and invited him to be present at the conference, "as, indeed," said the lawyer, blandly, "you have every right to be."

"No, I thank you," said Raleigh, and the door closed upon Isabel and Mr. Beardsby.

"My dear young lady," said the lawyer, standing before the fire, with his hands behind his back, "I am extremely sorry to disturb your festivities, and nothing but my assurance that you would wish to act promptly in the matter induced me to make this journey at the present time."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Beardsby. You have something unpleasant to say to me. Certainly, I wish to know it at once," returned Isabel, alarmed.

"I apprehend, Miss Isabel, that you had learned what I call the main fact of the case from your cousin."

"No, Raleigh has told me nothing, though I see that he knows."

"Knows! Of course he knows, and I must say that Mr. Raleigh Moor has acted in the most honorable manner," said Mr. Beardsby, with great deliberation. "Mr. Raleigh Moor remarked to my partner, Mr. Amsden, whom he consulted immediately upon his return to this country, that he, himself, would never have taken any steps in the matter. Our attention was directed to it by Messrs. Percival & Florence, acting in what they conceived to be their client's interest. It is due to Mr. Raleigh Moor to say, that as soon as he was informed of the action they had taken, he interposed to stop

the proceedings—a most honorable behaviour upon his part. But, I—"

"Mr. Beardsby, you forget that I do not yet know what you are speaking of," said Isabel. She got up from the chair where he had placed her, and stood by him, looking pale and anxious.

"My dear Miss Isabel, it is a most complicated case," said the lawyer, rubbing his hands in professional delight in the entanglement. "I am not sure that we might make such a formidable show of authorities as would induce him to enter a *nolle prosequi*, provided he wished to push it. The old English law—"

Isabel stopped him on the threshold of that ponderous theme.

"Please tell me what it is all about."

And at last the facts forced their way through his circumlocutions.

She was not the mistress of Moorfields. An old paper had been discovered, authenticated and indisputable, entailing the estate and its appurtenances upon her cousin Raleigh. And all these five years she had been living as if she were the heiress. She listened, in a kind of apathetic resignation, to Mr. Beardsby's prolix explanations. Only one thing was quite clear to her. Raleigh must have his own again, without delay.

After half an hour had passed, Mr. Beardsby went down-stairs. He found Raleigh walking up and down the hall.

"She sent me to ask you to come to her," said the lawyer.

In another moment Raleigh was standing by her, looking down into her pale face.

"I never meant—" he said, passionately.

She interrupted him.

"I know—Mr. Beardsby has told me. You did not mean I should know. It was like you, but that would not do, Raleigh. I shall give up Moorfields to you, at once."

"You know I will never take it," he cried.

"I hope it won't give you as much trouble as it has me," she continued. "I've been a very poor manager—Gregory will tell you that. I am sure you won't be hard on me, Cousin Raleigh, about the arrears of rent. I haven't money enough in the world to pay you."

She looked up at him, with a smile. He wound and unwound a stray curl of soft hair that had escaped from her net, a singular light playing over his face.

"Well! I turn you out-of-doors, and what then?" he said.

"I shall give up Moorfields to you, and then I shall go—I shall—Heaven help me, I have nowhere to go!" she cried, a sense of her utter loneliness sweeping over her, for the first time.

She shook with the tempest of sudden grief, and would have sunk down to the carpet at his feet. But he held her fast in his arms.

"What do you take me for, Isabel? Moorfields shall always be your home, if you will. I came here to ask you to be forever its mistress. You refused your love to me, years ago—will you give it to me now? I came all the way from India to ask you that question."

For one moment, all the past died away from Isabel's memory—all the anticipated loneliness of the future—swept away by the flood of delight in his love, lost in the heaven of happiness that his words opened to her. But instantly came back to her the scornful refusal she had given him, her bitterly repented aspersion of his motive. And now he was the heir, and she the beggar. Could she accept him now without shame? Her pride rose at the thought.

"Let me have my answer, Isabel."

His voice was cold, almost stern. The very intensity of his emotion made it so, and he looked down at her with a pale, fixed face, where Isabel could not see any tenderness. Was this a sacrifice he was making for her? Did he mean in this way to make her amends? Her proud head was lifted, a wave of color swept over the beautiful, haughty face. She drew back a step—all her pride showing in the gesture.

"It is enough, I am answered," he said, the sharp words cutting the air like steel. "At least, you will remain until after these festivities are past. I cannot turn your guests—I beg your pardon—my guests out of doors. I must beg you to assist me in entertaining them. So much, even a rejected lover may ask," he concluded, bitterly.

"I will stay willingly," said Isabel, very quietly and coldly. "I asked Mr. Beardsby to explain it to them down-stairs. If you go down now, I think you will receive their congratulations."

She did not mean it as a taunt, but it hurt him sorely. He strode out of the library in angry silence. Isabel dropped in a cor-

ner of the sofa, covering her face with her hands, and sobbing:

"O Raleigh, Raleigh!"

Down-stairs they were talking the matter over, the next day.

"So the master of Moorfields declined to drink his own health," said Blanche, in her sharp way. "It was very sensible, considering all things. Now the question arises, who is to be the mistress of Moorfields?"

"Miss Isabel would do admirably," said Harry Miles. "I wonder if Mr. Raleigh Moor will find that out? I've half a mind to suggest it to him."

"Do so, I beg," returned Blanche, mischievously. "I should like to see you. There he is!" And they both looked from the window where Raleigh was pacing up and down the avenue.

Harry shrugged his shoulders.

"Excuse me! I'd as lief encounter the Grand Mogul."

Indeed, Mr. Raleigh Moor did not seem to be in just the right mood for congratulations. He went about among the merry-makers like a shadow, and Blanche exhausted all her arts and graces—and her repertoire was neither scanty nor despicable—without making the least impression upon him.

The days went by. Raleigh held long conferences with Mr. Beardsby, and at last that gentleman went up to town. The last day of the old year vanished in a purple mist that swept up from the sea, and folded itself around the setting sun. The twilight grew into an almost starless night. A wan, gray cloud spread slowly up over half the heavens. A few flakes of snow fell, fore-tokens of the storm close at hand.

At midnight, some one opened the massive hall door and let himself out into the night. The great black mastiff arose and stretched himself in his kennel as the intruder passed his door. But Lion knew him well. He had galloped after him over the moors when the tall man was a boy.

"Good-by, Lion, old fellow. You'll never see me again." And a hand caressed the creature's shaggy, black head. "But you'll have good care, old dog. I know who would be thankful for half as much kindness as she gives you—and gets nothing. But no matter," and he passed on.

The horse standing in the stable knew her master's footsteps, and gave a low neigh

of pleasure, rubbing her cold nose along his sleeve.

"Softly now, Ladybird. Put your white feet down softly—nobody must know we are going. They'll miss us on the morrow, but no one will be the sadder for our going away. Now, Ladybird."

He led the horse down to the inner gate, and then springing into the saddle, cantered swiftly down the highway, the soft turf by the edge of the avenue deadening the tramp of hoofs. Then he looked back. The old, gray, stone pile was still and dark, except where a faint glimmer from one small window in the right wing stole out into the night. The horse stood still. The slow minutes passed. It was hard to go. What he had hoped for was so different. But then, it was useless to stay. There was no room for hope any longer.

"Let her go, then—the proud, cold, beautiful creature. She cannot help my loving her, if she would. And she must stay at Moorfields till—she finds some other home."

With that thought stinging him, Raleigh Moor turned his back upon the old house—standing still and grim and dark—as he believed, forever.

It was a gloomy night. No person, except one familiar with the country, would have found it easy to pick his way over the seven rough miles that lay between Moorfields and the nearest station. But Raleigh Moor knew every inch of the way. He had traversed it all when a boy—never thinking that he should ever carry away from Moorfields so heavy a heart as now beat in his bosom. Three miles off there rose a high hill, from which the old house was plainly seen. Climbing its summit, Raleigh drew rein, and turned to take a last look at Moorfields.

Instantly, and with a sudden exclamation, he rose in the saddle, gazing eagerly, scarcely knowing whether he were awake or dreaming. The black pile rose far off against the sky, and from the windows that had been closed and dark, red banners of flame were flung out into the night. And while he looked, the great front blazed out in one red cloud of fire.

Raleigh Moor wheeled his horse, and galloped madly back toward Moorfield. It was a terrible ride. The road was all alight now. No need now to pick one's way, carefully avoiding mire and fen. No need for

stealthy movements now. On with the tramp, and a clatter, and a dreadful, heart-breaking fear that he would be too late.

All sound asleep in the old house, he thought. Oh, if the flames cut off the stairways and he was not there! As he drew nearer, the grim battlements and old feudal symbols stood out distinct, unharmed by the hissing, fiery tongues that leapt around and caressed them. Each window was the portal to a cavern of fire. The quaint faces above the cornices looked down in strange mockery. Every object in the lurid foreground was fully outlined—the crowd of servants running hither and thither in wild alarm, the little group who had escaped from the building, and Harry Miles's tall figure trying to develop some efficient service. And now he heard the cries of the women, and the loud baying of the mastiff from his kennel. In another moment he was among them, asking, with pallid lips:

"Where is Isabel?"

No one knew. Her room was in the right wing. It might be possible to pass the stairways, but there were the long corridors to traverse; the apartments were doubtless filled with smoke, even now the flames were belching from the windows just below Isabel's.

Raleigh listened indifferently, while they crowded around, endeavoring to dissuade him from a hopeless attempt. All the time he was making ready for the venture.

"Unloose the dog."

With trembling fingers old Gregory unchained the mastiff, and at a call from Raleigh, the noble creature bounded to his side.

"Now, Lion, good fellow, come, Lion!"

He ran around to the rear of the building. Here was a narrow stairway, yet untouched.

"Now, Lion, find your mistress."

Lion whined around him, eying him with an intelligent, wistful face, and when Raleigh sprang up the stairs, leapt forward and followed close behind. The air was hot and suffocating. Great clouds rolled out, and blinded and choked him. Still Raleigh pressed forward, exploring room after room, calling upon her name, and urging on the dog in the search. At length Lion bayed loudly, cleared at a leap a narrow river of fire, and disappeared in the smoke. Raleigh followed, and found himself in a little room remote from the main wing, and as yet quite secure. A gleam of white gar-

ments in a corner—a tender, despairing cry.

“O Raleigh, Raleigh, my love! why did you come? You cannot help me.”

She flung herself into his arms, her beautiful hair pushed wildly back from a face white as death. The terrible glare of the fire was over them both. It lit Raleigh’s face, grown strangely proud and full of joy.

“You love me, then!”

He held her in his arms, kissed the wan cheek and fair hair. All at once she knew that he loved her, that he had always loved her, that he always would love her. Oh the fervid tenderness that so appealed to her for answer! It came warm and quick from a full heart.

“I love you, Raleigh. Oh! why did you come? I would have died alone here, sooner than you should have put your life in peril.” Yet she clung to him, shuddering. “There is no hope,” she murmured.

A smile was in his eyes. No, it was not too late. Yield to the fire-fend now? It was not possible. He picked up her shawl from the floor, wrapped her in it, drenched himself and her in water from the ewer. Only one or two raging gulfs of fire to cross, and beyond, safety—if God pleased.

“Now for life and happiness! Lion, go—find the way, good fellow!”

The dog cleared the space at a long bound. A moment’s hesitation. No alternative. A dizzy height above the ground—descent was impossible. This was the only way. The half-burnt timbers swayed under his feet. Almost, he lost his foothold; but for the good dog’s teeth planted firmly in his coat, he would surely have failed.

Isabel never knew how she was carried again into the blessed air of heaven. She came back from her swoon, to find Raleigh lying on the ground, stunned and bruised, his hands scorched, his garments blackened. But not dead. God had not required that sacrifice.

The fire had thrown its light far and wide, illuminating all the wide moor, and glowing redly on the white sands along the shore. It touched the windows of the village houses with bright fingers, and called the sleeping people in eager troops across the country. But the work of the fire was finished when they came. The gray, massive walls stood grandly as ever, but within was one mass of smouldering ruin.

Old Gregory opened the doors of his cottage to his master. Looking from its humble window, Isabel saw the sun rise on that first morning of the year. Bright and beautiful, its red gold slipped above the waste of waters, and shone over fen and upland, the dim pine woods, and the ruins of Moorfield. She drew the curtain wide.

“I should never have seen it again, Raleigh, but for you.”

The light streamed over the bed where Raleigh lay. She knelt by it, tenderly touching the very senseless things about him, as though she could not pity him enough.

“You make too much of it, dear. A broken limb is nothing. I have taken more leaps than that—not with such a risk,”—and Raleigh shuddered.

“But that was taken for me.”

“Well! you shall pay me for it,” he said, smiling. “It will make no difference who owns Moorfields now. And the old house shall be refitted before the year has gone.”

The year has gone. Moorfields house is stately and beautiful. Lion deserves to be canonized. But I am not aware that any church would enroll him among his saints. Like all his race, living and loving and serving, he dies at last, and is forgotten. I am sorry there is no hereafter for such as he. Not that he exercises his mind with such speculation. Sweetest food, softest housing, and tenderest strokings from day to day by gentle, white hands, fill up the measure of his needs and aspirations.

HER FIRST AND THIRD HUSBANDS.

BY W. H. MACY.

IN the house nearly opposite to my father's, in the days of my boyhood, lived Captain David Russell, a retired mariner, who appeared to be in comfortable circumstances, and to enjoy life as a hale hearty man of sixty odd, who is happy in his domestic relations, as he ought to be.

He had two sons, the elder of whom was in active service at sea as mate of a ship, while the other, who was about thirty, kept a small store down town, and lived with his wife and one little fairy of a girl in a part of the same house with the old folks, though making a separate family. The name on his sign door down town read, "J. Bunker Russell," and I observed that the neighbors in speaking of him often called him "John Bunker," as if that were his full name. Even my own mother, though she took pride in being very correct as to the use of names, would sometimes forget herself and send me on an errand to John Bunker's store. I could not help thinking this very strange, and one day, on my return, I determined to know whether there was any good reason for it.

"Mother," said I, "Isn't his name John Bunker Russell?"

"Why yes, child. What makes thee ask?" My mother was a birthright Quaker,

and from the force of education and habit generally used the plain language to her children, though she did not insist upon our doing the same, but left us quite free in this respect.

"Why, you most always tell me to go down to John Bunker's store."

"Do I? Well, what of it? That's his name, or at least a part of it. But if thee is so particular, I must try to remember and say Russell every time."

"O, I am not very particular, mother, but *you* are in every other case but this."

Mother laughed. "Well, I'll tell thee," she said. "His name *was* John Bunker, and the Russell was added after he grew up. Now don't bother me with questions about it, for I couldn't tell thee the whole particulars of the story."

"Then of course," said I, "he isn't David Russell's son?"

"I didn't say that he *was* or *wasn't*," answered my dear mother. "There now, let me alone."

"And as Captain Paul Russell is older than John Bunker," said I, puzzling over it, "of course Aunt Judith Russell, as we call her, isn't Paul's own mother."

"Yes she is, too. Now ask thy father, when he gets back from New York, and he

can tell thee all about it, for he knows the names of the different places, and the ships, and all about it."

My father was then absent, being captain of a coaster; but I did not fail to get the whole story of the Russell family from him on his return. And now, at this distance of time, when all the principal parties in the drama have passed on, I can tell the story in my own way.

On a Sabbath morning in 1805, David Russell and Judith Swain stood side by side in the Friends' meeting-house at Nantucket, and solemnly pledged themselves, each to the other, as husband and wife, after the manner of their sect. Both were young and ardent, full of hope for the future, and rich in love for each other, if not in worldly goods and chattels. David had already shipped when he plighted his faith to his bride, and the honey-moon had not yet waned when he sailed on a voyage to Walwich Bay as mate of the good ship *Leo*, whereof his old acquaintance and neighbor, Aaron Bunker, was master.

The ship held her course across the Atlantic towards the Azores, intending to touch at one of these islands before proceeding on her southern voyage, and when nearly up with the longitude of Flores, a heavy gale was experienced, compelling the ship to lay to for safety. During Russell's watch on deck one night, and when the gale was at its height, a strange sail was seen close aboard, driving directly down upon the *Leo's* quarter, under scudding canvas. Owing to the blackness of the night and the rate at which the stranger was moving, she was so near when the alarm was given that there was no time to get the ship headed off to avoid a collision. Russell, in a voice of thunder, ordered the tiller to be jammed hard up, and then jumped upon the taffrail just as the strange ship's jibboom, high in air, passed across, sweeping away the *Leo's* spanker gaff and all the gear attached, as if it had been cobwebs, while the bluff of the bow, striking a spare spar which projected through the stern-hawse of the *Leo*, snapped off like a mere pipestem. But both ships were saved, for it was but a glancing blow. The danger had been perceived just in time by those on board the scudding ship, but the helm had been forced hard a starboard. At the instant of contact, she was swinging rapidly in obedience to her rudder, and as

the spare spar broke, the two vessels cleared each other by a very touch-and-go.

The little whaler, despite her helm, was forced up into the wind, and narrowly escaped foundering before she could be got back to her former course. When this was fairly done, all on board breathed more freely, but shuddered as they thought of the hairbreadth escape from total destruction. But where, O where, was Mr. Russell? The last seen of the young mate was when he jumped upon the taffrail, the last sound heard from him was his stentorian cry to those on board the strange ship, "Starboard! Hard a starboard!" His fate, like that of thousands of brave seamen and soldiers, was to be summed up in the one awful word, "Missing!"

All that could be known of the stranger was that she was a very large ship, and apparently a man-of-war, and some had heard voices shouting in great excitement, but seemingly in some foreign tongue. At daylight the next morning the gale had somewhat abated, but no sail was in sight from the *Leo's* masthead, and so without material damage, save in the loss of her chief mate, she made sail, touching at Fayal, where a new officer was shipped, and then proceeded on her cruise in the South Atlantic.

Meanwhile, the young wife, in her quiet home at Nantucket, had settled down into the matron, enrolling herself in the ranks of those whose missions seemed to be, in those days, to wait like faithful Penelope for the return of their long-absent lords. But she had not to wait long for the fatal tidings; for the early arrival of another whaler from Walwich Bay, which had spoken the *Leo*, set the dreadful truth beyond all doubt, and the bride of a few short months was a widow, even before the beautiful seal of maternity had been set upon the fair brow.

In due time the *Leo*, deeply laden with oily treasure, arrived home.

The sight of her lost husband's shipmates only stirred anew the wound in the widow's heart, yet there was consolation in the sympathetic visit of Captain Bunker, and his generous praises of his lost mate. The *Leo* was to be fitted out again immediately, and the captain's stay on shore was very brief. Time works wonders, as we all know, and it had already begun to exert its healing influence. Aaron Bunker, though on the verge of thirty, was thus far a

bachelor, and to the surprise of both matrons and maidens, he seemed determined to remain so for the present. And so, when he had made more voyages, and five years had elapsed since the fatal night of the collision off the Azores, it was a matter of no surprise to the staid and prudent members of the Society of Friends that David Russell's widow stood again in the meeting-house, to exchange vows with her second husband. She had done well, everybody said; little Paul would have a kind father, and as for Aaron, he, too, had certainly chosen wisely.

And Judith was, indeed, happy in the new marriage relation, though as Captain Bunker had more voyages to make, she was still forced to continue the part of waiting Penelope. Two more years passed, and the long train of grievances endured by our seamen had led to a rupture between our government and that of Great Britain.

It was a heavy hour for Judith Bunker when the news of the declaration of war reached her island home. Captain Bunker had sailed but a few months before on a voyage to the Pacific Ocean; he was away on the other side of Cape Horn, and his return not to be looked for under two years. Would the Ardent run the gauntlet in safety? was now an anxious question, for, in addition to the ordinary dangers of the seas, it was now predicted by those who ought to know, that the enemy's naval cruisers would infest every sea, the Pacific as well as the Atlantic. But like a brave little woman, she tried to hope for the best, and while she prayed for the safety of her husband, she strove to do her whole duty by her two boys, so unlike each other, and yet so equally dear to her mother's heart. As she looked upon Paul, now a stout stripling, and already talking of the time when he, too, should go "round Cape Horn," a tear would sometimes escape her, as a tribute to the memory of him to whom the freshness of her first love had been given. But this was over in a moment, for her heart told her that he was gone forever, and that her duties were with the living present and the anxious future.

The story now returns to David Russell, who, although mourned as lost, and believed to be at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, had been preserved by one of those strange chances which seem little short of miracles, and which are yet not so uncom-

mon in the career of the sailor or soldier. At the moment of the collision when the strange ship's jibboom was very nearly over his head, he had been thrown from his balance and lost his footing. Clutching wildly in the air, he seized upon some rope, he knew not what, but supposed at the instant it was the spanker rang of his own ship. More rapidly than he could think, he was lifted and swung out into the darkness, while his only safety lay in clinging desperately to whatever he had laid hold upon. A moment more, and he realized that he was far away from the Leo, and among the bowsprit gear of the other ship. Her jibboom had been carried away in the conflict, but he had been fortunate enough to escape without bodily injury. As soon as he found his footing, and partially regained strength, he made his way in over the ship's bow, when he found himself surrounded by a crowd of rough bearded seamen, talking in a language which he did not understand, but which he knew well enough to be French.

From the size of the ship, and the great number of men on her deck, he supposed that she was a man-of-war, and he was soon taken in charge by a young officer who spoke good English, and escorted aft to tell his story to the captain. That potentate thought the story sufficiently marvellous, but as he could not doubt the tale with the living evidence before him, he only shrugged his shoulders and expressed his astonishment in pantomime, as Russell's statement was interpreted to him. The vessel was the Formidable, line-of-battle-ship, which had been with several others of her class on the West India station, but was now returning, to join the combined French and Spanish fleet. She had been separated from her consorts before the gale came on, and was now making the best of her way to the home rendezvous. Beyond the loss of her jibboom, the ship had sustained no material damage in the collision with the Leo.

Russell was well treated on board the Frenchman, but the prospect before him was anything but cheering to a young man of his character and nationality. His voyage, which he had begun with such high hopes, was of course broken up and lost. All Europe was in a state of war, and the chances of returning to his own country for years to come were very uncertain, even if he were permitted to be a free agent. But

every able-bodied man, and especially every able seaman, was wanted in these troubled times; the fleets of both English and French must be manned, and those in authority were not wont to be over-scrupulous as to the means made use of to get recruits. From the hour he set foot on board the man-of-war, Russell was beset with solicitations to enter his name as a volunteer in the French navy, but all offers and blandishments were steadily refused. His determination, kept always in view, was to make his escape and get back to his own country as soon as any opportunity presented itself, and he resolved that if he served under any other flag than his own, it should be under compulsion, and never as a volunteer.

In due time the *Formidable* safely ran the gauntlet of the English blockading squadron, and joined the combined fleet in the Bay of Cadiz. But Russell was not permitted to go on shore, and though he succeeded in gaining the ear of the French admiral, he received no satisfaction from the interview, for the truth was, he was too fine a man to be lost. He was urged, coaxed, solicited, and even threatened, but he steadily refused to enlist, and returned to the *Formidable* as a sort of prisoner, though on duty. He preferred duty of any kind, however, to a life of sulky inaction, so he resolved to be quiet and submissive, and to bide his time.

In a few days the whole fleet put to sea, and soon after gave battle to the ships of Nelson off Trafalgar. In the great conflict, Russell found himself bearing a part, though with little heart or soul in that result; but the *Formidable* was one of the captured ships, and he became a prisoner in the hands of the English, thus literally jumping out of the pan into the fire, for notwithstanding his straight-forward story, confirmed by his French shipmates, little heed was given to it, and it was apparent that England expected every man—who spoke good English—to do his duty.

He was transferred and changed about from one ship to another, until his original statement and his identity were entirely lost sight of. When he attempted to remonstrate, he was charged with being a renegade Englishman, and threatened with hanging at the yardarm; for he was assured that it would not be difficult to find those who would swear to him as a deserter from

the British navy. There was no help for it but patience, and he submitted to his fate, but always doing duty as a pressed man, and stoutly refusing to enroll his name as a volunteer. Thus seven years of the prime of his life were worn away, with no opportunity for escape from his thralldom. He was seldom allowed to go on shore in any port where it was possible to desert successfully, and was always under watch and guard as a pressed man, and one not to be trusted out of sight.

He had several times written letters to his wife, and to others in his native island, but none of these ever reached their destination. Two or three attempts at desertion had proved failures, and had only served to make his situation the harder, and to cut off the little liberty which had before been allowed him. Swallowed up in the insatiable maw of the British navy, he had nearly settled down into the most hopeless, aimless existence, when the war was declared in 1812, and he found himself compelled to serve actively against the land of his birth. But still a little gleam of hope stole into his benighted heart, when he learned that he, with others, was to be assigned to the *Ringdove*, sloop-of-war, and sent on a cruise to the Pacific Ocean.

The chances of communicating with his home, and even the chance of final escape, would be much improved if he could get into the South Sea on the further side of Cape Horn. With this hope to live for, he became more cheerful, and did his duty so well that he soon rose high in the estimation of the commander and officers of the *Ringdove*, being valued as one of the finest seamen on board.

After doubling Cape Horn, the sloop-of-war proceeded to Valparaiso to refit, finding no American vessel in port on the arrival. Russell, having completely won the confidence of his commanding officer, was allowed liberty on shore with his watchmates, and he now determined to make a bold push for freedom. He bargained with a Chillan, who agreed, for a certain consideration, to stow him away in his own house, and keep him snug until the *Ringdove* should be far away in blue water. But as his watch was likely to have another turn on shore before sailing, he meant to defer his attempt until this last day on land, when the ship would be ready for sea. He saw no one in his wanderings about the port whom he could

recognize as an old acquaintance, but having learned in the course of his inquiries that the captain of a Nantucket whaler was lying sick in the marine hospital, he went without loss of time to find him. He was admitted according to his request, but was cautioned not to talk to the sick man, who was prostrate with fever, and not in a condition to bear any fatigue or excitement. Still he was not considered to be in danger, the attendant said; only "comfortably sick." "What was his name?" The official did not remember, but it was down on the books somewhere.

Russell approached the bedside eagerly, for he felt almost sure he could recognize any shipmaster of those who claimed Nantucket as their birthplace.

Nor was he mistaken in this instance, for eight years of active service, and a long fit of sickness, had not so changed the looks of his old friend and comrade Aaron Bunker but that he was instantly known. Russell's first impulse was to rush to him, to grasp his hand, to take him in his arms; but he restrained himself, and stood waiting to see what effect his apparition, as if from the dead, would have upon the captain. The sick man, who appeared to be quite clear in mind, at first turned his glance mechanically and with an air of indifference upon the man in English man-of-war rig, but gradually his dull eyes dilated, and strange emotion made itself visible in his haggard face. He placed his thin hand over his eyes, as if to get a better view.

"He never had a twin brother, that I knew of," he muttered to himself. Then suddenly he cried, in great agitation, "Speak, man! Are you David Russell, or his ghost?" Then, as if ashamed of this emotion, he closed his eyes, muttering again, "No—no—he went to the bottom of the Atlantic eight years ago. Besides, if he were alive, he never could wear that rig."

His hand was seized with a strong hearty grasp, which made him start up from his pillow. There was no attendant near to interfere, or the interview might have been cut short at this point.

"I am David Russell, in the flesh, and no ghost at all. It's a long story to tell how I come to be here, and sailing under *these* colors; but you may, and you do know, Aaron Bunker, that it is not of my own free will, and I trust to break my chains very

soon. You are the first man from old Nantucket that I have looked upon for eight years. But I must not excite you while you are so weak. Be calm now, and tell me all about home and the dear ones I left there."

His heart was so full that he could not yet utter the name of the one dear one, dearer than all else besides. But he was entirely unprepared for the terrible agitations of this old friend, whom he thus exhorted to be calm.

"Calm, calm!" repeated the sick man, in almost a shriek of agony. "David Russell, you— But no, it is all a dream, and yet it is not, for I am in my right mind. How in heaven's name did you— But no matter, it's enough that you are here alive, and telling me to be calm!"

Russell thought he must be wandering in mind, and did his best to quiet and soothe him. But the one question he must have an answer to.

"My wife, Aaron? Tell me that my wife is well, or *was* when you last left home. Tell me this, Aaron, and I will not excite you more. I will leave as soon as you have answered this question!"

"Leave! No, sit down, man. Sit here, close at my side, for you must know all," said the sick man, with forced calmness. "Your wife? How can I tell you? and yet I *must*. My God! David Russell, do you know? No, of course you do *not* know that your wife has been *my* wife for the past three years!"

The grasp of the hand relaxed. Russell's face dropped upon the side of the bed, and his strong frame shook with the agony of the first shock. Both men were silent for two or three minutes.

"She mourned you truly, David, and gave five full years to your memory. I made three more voyages in the *Leo*, always waiting and hoping before I spoke to her of love. I have been very happy with Judith, and I have been faithful to your boy, David—for you *have* a boy, and a noble one, too—as I was to my own, who is still but an infant. Both boys call her 'mother,' David, and she loves them equally. But if she knew what you and I know at this moment, I think her dear heart would be broken."

Another shudder went through the powerful frame—the last one—and Russell raised his face with an expression stern and

yet tender. He seemed to have seen his way clear, and to be strong with high resolve.

"Her dear heart shall not be broken, Aaron, for she need never know the truth. I confess that for eight years I have cherished the hope of meeting Judith again in this world; but that is all over now. Go back to your wife, Aaron, and be happy; for although she is also my wife, it could bring nothing but misery to her to know that I am living."

"But you must know, David, that the legal claim is yours."

"If it is mine, I waive it now and forever. I shall try to escape as soon as I can from this accursed British service; but I shall never make myself known to any townsman of mine. There is room enough somewhere in the world for all of us. This secret is yours and mine, Aaron. I know that you will keep it inviolate for her sake."

"And you have no blame either for her or me?" asked Captain Bunker, in a choking voice.

"Blame! no; my wife—our wife, Aaron, is above all blame. There is no blame attaching to any one in such a case; and yet strange it is that this very fact makes it the harder to bear for all three of the parties. Keep the secret, Aaron, to your grave! I only ask that you will do your duty by my boy, as I know you have done it heretofore, and let me be forgotten."

"I would gladly promise all this to you, David, for I know and feel that you are right. Yours is the best and only true solution of such a problem, whatever the law may say about it. For the sake of her peace—though I hope not from any more selfish motive—I could make you the promise you ask for, and keep it, too. But in this case, David, the problem will work out its own solution in a better way even than you have suggested. I feel that such promises on my part would be idle, for I shall never live to fulfil them. They say that I am getting better now, but I know that my strength is falling day by day, and feel that my time on earth is very short. No, you need not tell me that I am foolish, or that I alarm myself without good cause, for I see it in your face that you are going to say something of the kind. I think I know my own condition and chances of life, and I feel sure that I never shall see Judith again. Now I want you in your turn to make a

promise to me. If you break away from the forced service under the English flag, which I think you will do very soon, make inquiries about me, and as soon as you know that I have ceased to live, return to your wife. For she is lawfully and truly your wife, and will love you, if you returned under those circumstances, even as she now loves your memory, believing you dead for years. David, we both love this woman, and are studying her happiness; if you love her well enough to conceal from her the knowledge of your existence, that she may be happy with me, you must certainly love her well enough to promise that you will do as I desire, in case you hear of my death."

"I will!" answered Russell, solemnly. "But if I should escape, as I hope to in this port, the chances are that I shall return to America penniless. You have not thought of that."

"Indeed I have," answered Aaron Bunker. "I have left something behind, for I have been moderately prosperous in money matters, and meant, when I sailed in the *Ardent*, that this should be my last voyage. Judith is not penniless, by any means. By my will, executed before I sailed, all that I leave goes to her during life, and after her, to your child and mine, in equal shares. Promise me *this*, too, David—that you will be a father to my boy, as I have been and always intended to be to yours."

The promise was given by Russell with as much emotion as if his friend had been really at the point of death.

"I feel very happy in this promise, for we know that, as old shipmates, we can rely upon each other's word. Give me your hand upon it, David. Mark what I say, I am nearer the end than you or the doctors think—but I am not afraid to die, for I have kept a fair record; and though I married your wife, it seems, yet I have done no wrong, knowingly, to man or woman. With this promise from you, I may say that I am quite content, and stand ready when the time comes. And now let us talk of other matters. My ship, the *Ardent*, is nearly full of oil—at any rate, she has a good voyage in her hold already. She is now out here on a short cruise, in charge of my mate, Joe Barnard; you know him well. Joe is a good whaler and a worthy fellow, but he is not the man I would desire to leave in charge, if I had any choice in the matter. He will follow anywhere, if

somebody else will lead, but he lacks confidence in himself as soon as he is thrown upon his own resources. I only wish that you, David Russell, were on board the Ardent and had command of her."

"Do you expect her in here soon?" Russell asked.

"No, I hope not, for she would run into the very jaws of death before I could get on board myself, weak as I am now. I told Mr. Barnard to look in at Talcahuana first, and to find out there whether any man-of-war was in this bay before he started round here. I gave him these orders because I had heard a rumor that your ship, the Ringdove, and several others were coming round in this station, hoping to capture David Porter, who is scouring the Pacific in that saucy frigate the Essex."

The attendant belonging to the hospital here hurried in with a very anxious face, like a night-watchman rushing up after a row is all over. But seeing the sick man evidently so calm and happy, he returned again, and the two held another hour's conversation together. Russell related the story of his miraculous escape on the night of the collision, and something of his subsequent adventures; and Captain Bunker went more into detail concerning a hundred matters at home, in which the long absent wanderer was deeply interested. He was still full of anxiety about his ship, and from time to time returned to that subject. He himself owned a quarter of the Ardent and her cargo. She was a great traveller, and with a fair start, he did not fear the Ringdove, or any other British cruiser; but there were the chances of the elements, and his want of confidence in his mate's firmness.

At the hour of parting they mutually renewed their promises concerning the woman they loved and her children.

"But," said Aaron, again, "my promise amounts to nothing, because I shall never live to carry it out. When you come ashore again, call here before you start up country for Santiago. I may have more to say to you. If I am not living, I will leave a written message for you."

When Russell got his last liberty day on shore, some ten days later, he lost no time in making inquiry at the hospital. But the shock to his feelings was terrible when he learned that Captain Bunker had been buried the day before. His words had been

indeed prophetic, and he was nearer his end when he uttered them than even he himself had supposed. A package was delivered to Russell by the steward of the hospital, and on opening it a considerable sum in ready money was found, with three letters directed by the feeble hand of the dying man. One of these was for Russell himself, another for Judith, and the third for his mate on board the Ardent.

Russell could be of no further use at the hospital, and his duties at once called him elsewhere. He sought his Chilean friend, and having exchanged his man-of-war clothes for the dress of the country, they mounted their horses for a ride inland. But just then a courier came up from the southward with a report that a ship, supposed to be a whaler, was in sight, coasting along towards the port. A word to this guide, and still better a dollar displayed to his view, served to change their direction, and they rode at breakneck speed along shore to the southward.

A ride of three hours brought them abreast of the ship, and Francisco, further stimulated by another dollar, was not long in finding a friend who was ready to carry them out in his fishing-boat. As the wind was light, they soon succeeded in heading off the Ardent, for Russell knew her well enough from Aaron's description.

"Where's Mr. Barnard?" demanded Russell, as he jumped in on the quarter-deck.

Mr. Barnard was below, suffering from severe injuries, having been hurt by a whale a few days before. The second mate now had charge, and knowing little of navigation, had got hold of the land, as he expressed it, and was following it along towards the Bay of Valparaiso.

"You are rushing right into the enemy's hands," said Russell. "You had better bring her to the wind, and work off again as fast as you can, for the Ringdove is in the bay, and her boats will be out after you, as they have got the news before this time. It was lucky that I heard it before the English officers did. But I must see Joe Barnard at once. I have a letter for him, and I hope he is able to read it."

He was able to read, though suffering from severe injuries, and the reading of the letter, written by a dying man, who was master and part owner of the ship, and delivered as it was by an old acquaintance

risen from a watery grave, had wonderful effect. Russell found himself at once in a post of honor, fully authorized to act, and, in fact, commander of the *Ardent de facto* if not *de jure*. For both the crippled and suffering mate and the young inexperienced second officer were glad to be relieved of the responsibility.

While the Ringdove's boats were waiting at the mouth of Valparaiso Bay, to board and capture the *Ardent* in neutral waters, and the police were hunting far and near for the deserter Russell, the stout little whaler, with the deserter in charge, was speeding away under a crowd of canvas, laying her course for Cape Horn—homeward bound.

It was a day of great rejoicing among the good people of the island when the news spread abroad that a deeply-laden ship, known by her distinctive flag to be the *Ardent*, had successfully run the gauntlet of the hostile cruisers, and was coming to anchor off Nantucket Bar. It was not until the swift whaleboat lowered from her sides touched the beach at the Cliff Shore,

that the truth was known concerning the death of Captain Bunker, and the resurrection of David Russell from his supposed ocean grave. He did not present himself before his wife until she sent for him, but the letter of Aaron, with the seal unbroken as he received it, was delivered to her by a trusty hand, and its contents, sacred to her eyes alone, made all things clear, and prepared the way to happiness. Upon the first interview between Judith and her long-lost husband, not even the pen of the novelist has a right to intrude.

After a suitable interval of time David and Judith remarried, and entered upon a new career of happiness. After peace was proclaimed the captain made two more successful voyages, taking his boy Paul with him, and then returned with a competency. By special act of the General Court, little John Bunker had the name of Russell added, and until grown to manhood knew of no other father than the man who is still equally dear to him and to his sailor brother, and who was thus strangely their mother's first and third husband.

"HER VOICE WAS HER FORTUNE."

BY FLORENCE EDWIN.

"ONCE for all, no!" my father said, with stern decision. "I have no intention of throwing my money away for such a purpose. Singing lessons, indeed! Mrs. Denvessey might better have employed her time, than in putting such notions into your head." And he strode away, muttering angrily.

"Stingy old thing!" I cried, bitterly, as I watched him out of sight, with anything but filial feelings.

"Ethel! Ethel Marsden!" The hateful voice of my stepmother sounded shrill and distinct, but I paid no attention, and marched along as if I had not heard. Down by the brook, under the great apple tree, I flung myself down on the grass and burst into a passion of tears. Long and bitterly I sobbed, as if my heart would break, for the faint hope I had indulged, that my father might consent to my request, was now ruthlessly destroyed.

That summer, when Mrs. Denvessey had come to board at our house, I had just turned fourteen. The winter before, the only enjoyment in my desolate life had been taken from me. My stepmother had declared that I was getting too old to go to school. That was enough; her law was supreme, and I was withdrawn, and kept busy from morning until night. Do my best, no word of praise was vouchsafed me, only continual scolding and fault-finding, daily complaints to my father of my heedlessness and shiftlessness, until I grew callous and defiant, and so cross and morose that my stepmother was glad to let me alone.

But when Mrs. Denvessey came my life grew brighter. She took a fancy to have me about her, and though my stepmother would have liked to refuse, she did not dare. So for four long weeks I was exempt from any daily drudgery. With the happier life came happier feelings, and in a joyous mood I would break out into some merry song as I went about my work in Mrs. Denvessey's room. I had never thought my voice anything remarkable, until I sang for her. She declared that it would make my fortune if properly trained, and she had

promised to ask my father to let me take lessons, but she had left without fulfilling her promise. So I had plucked up courage on that memorable afternoon, and proffered my request, and it had met with a decided refusal.

All the afternoon I lay there on the grass, forming plans for the future. I had fully made up my mind to leave my father's house. I had a little money that Mrs. Denvessey had given me. With it I could pay my fare to the great city where she dwelt, and when there, it would go hard if I could not find her. I was confident that she would assist me, if I could get to her, for she had often expressed pity for me.

Fully resolved to carry out this plan, I went back to the house. My stepmother was bustling about, getting supper ready. She looked up with no pleasant expression as I entered.

"Well, Miss Lazibones, you've managed to come home when you got ready," was her refined greeting. And as I made no reply:

"O, your sulking wont do any good. You needn't think you'll gain your point in that way, or in any other, for that matter. A great pity that your father wont throw his money away. For my part, I do not see anything wonderful about your voice. Like enough, Mrs. Denvessey was making game of you."

I saw she was bent on provoking me to an outburst of temper, and therefore kept my lips shut tightly, going about my accustomed duties, the last I should perform under that roof. When my father came in he administered a stern reprimand for my idleness, but I scarcely heard him, so full was I of my new project. As soon as I had put away the supper dishes, I went up to my own little room. I gathered together the few articles of clothing, and tied them up in a bundle. Then, dressed as I was, I threw myself on the pallet—for my bed was nothing better—to wait until the house was still.

I had not long to wait, for our household retired early. I had procured a strong rope, and with this I swung myself to the

ground below. I had not dared to descend the creaking stairs, lest my intention of flight should be discovered. I picked up my bundle, which I had thrown out first from the window, and leaving the rope that had safely landed me hanging from the window, I turned my back on the home where I had known nought but unkindness.

Out on the highway, I trudged along the road that led to the neighboring town, where I intended to take the cars for the city, a distance of five good miles. I walked on and on. I met no one, and felt no lonely fear that would have oppressed me another time. Finally, footsore and weary, I halted at the edge of a dense wood. I secured a resting-place where I would be secure from observation should there be any passer-by. I had only intended to sit down for a few moments, but I was asleep before I thought of it. I woke up with a start at early dawn. Provoked at my inability to keep awake, but greatly refreshed, I resumed my journey. The sun was just rising as I walked into the station. The station-master regarded me curiously while procuring my ticket. From him I learned that I had half an hour in which to wait for the train. Never did a half hour seem so long, but at last I heard the welcome whistle, and soon I was seated in the cars, steaming as fast as steam could carry me to that unknown world where I was to find fortune and fame. After a ride of perhaps two hours I came to my journey's end. I followed the throng of people out of the depot and up a broad street. The crowd I was following steadily decreased, and at last the remaining two vanished into a large store. Still I kept on straight ahead. I passed a small cake shop, and the tempting display made me feel very hungry. My money was not all gone, so I went in and bought some cake of a pleasant-faced young woman. I ventured to ask if I might rest and eat. She nodded good-naturedly, eyeing me curiously the while, especially my bundle.

When I had finished I thanked her, and was about departing, when the thought flashed across my mind that perhaps she might know something of Mrs. Denvessey. I accordingly put the question to her, but she shook her head blankly.

"What street does she live on?" she queried. "You don't know!" with a surprised look. "Then I'm sure you'll never be able to find her. It's like looking for a

needle in a haystack, to try and find any one in this city, unless you know their street and number. I don't know what you'll do, I'm sure—stay, though; do you know her husband's name and business?"

Happily, I did. Mrs. Denvessey had told me that her husband was a successful merchant, and her letters had always borne the superscription, "Mrs. John Denvessey." Possessing this information, the young woman advised me to go into the opposite store and ask for the directory, giving me directions how to search for the residence of John Denvessey, merchant.

I did as she bade me. I looked in the book and found the street and number, but how to get there was my next puzzle. But I was not slow to ask for the information I needed. I was directed to take a certain car, and to ask the conductor to put me off at the street where I wished to stop. The ride in the car was a long one, and I was thinking the conductor had forgotten all about me, when I heard the name of my street called. The conductor stopped the car, and I got out, giving my last cent to pay the fare.

The street on which Mrs. John Denvessey resided was a very grand one, to judge from the stately edifices: 573 was the number of the house, and the one on the corner was marked 431. I looked at the next, and found that I must go up the street. At last I came to 573; there it was, an imposing stone mansion, with broad marble steps. My heart beat fast and hard as I ascended and timidly rang the bell.

The massive door was opened by a servant in livery, who stared at me as he might at some beggar child soliciting alms. In a faint voice I inquired for Mrs. Denvessey.

"Tell her that it is Ethel Marsden from Derry," I said, eagerly. "She will know, and she will be sure to see me." For the man had murmured something about her being too busy to see any one at that time.

Eyeing me askance, he bade me come in. I was conducted to a small reception-room, plainly but elegantly furnished, and there I was told to wait while the servant announced my coming. Presently the door opened to admit a lady in deep mourning, with a sad sweet face.

"You wished to see me?" she queried, in a surprised tone.

I shook my head. "It was Mrs. Denvessey I wished to see," I answered.

"Your wish is gratified. I am Mrs. Denvessey."

"You!" I cried, with dismay. "O dear, what shall I do? and how can I find my Mrs. Denvessey?"

"I thought there was some mistake when your name was announced. I could not remember ever having heard it before. But do not look so distressed, my poor child. How happens it that such a wee mite as you should be out alone on your mission, and with no sure direction to find the lady you seek?"

I could not answer for my tears. I dare say I was completely tired out, and this disappointment discouraged me. The lady endeavored in the kindest manner to soothe my distress, and by skillful questioning drew from me my story. She looked very grave during its recital, and when I had finished, said, seriously:

"You were very unwise to quit your father's house on such a wild-goose chase; for, my dear, it might have been from a small misery into a greater. God knows what your fate might have been had not Providence led you to this house. Even had you found the lady you seek, she might have been unwilling to help you, and you would thus be thrown on the cold charity of the world. But dry your tears. You shall sing for me. I know a great deal about music, and can tell you if there is any probability of the realization of your ambition."

I did her bidding quickly, my tears flowing back into their proper channel easily, now that her kind manner put new hope into my heart. I sang a pathetic little ballad with which I had often hushed to sleep my baby stepbrother. How vividly the scene comes back! The girl—scarcely more than a child, for I was small for my age—with her shabby dress, the bundle fallen at her feet, the hat pushed back from the hot brow, and the eyes so recently full of tears fixed earnestly on the face of the lady, elegantly dressed, with her refined patrician air, unbent a trifle now by her expression of kindly pity.

Need I say that I sang with all my heart and soul? I had not gotten through the first stanza before Mrs. Denvessey's eyes filled with tears. Later, I learned that she had lost both husband and daughter a year before, and it was breaking open afresh the wound to hear that song, recalling such bitter-sweet memories. Though I, of course,

could not know then the cause of her weeping, I stopped involuntarily, but she signified for me to finish.

When she had in a measure regained her composure, she said:

"You have, indeed, my child, a voice of rare power and sweetness. It were a pity to suffer it to be neglected. Therefore, give up your search for the Mrs. Denvessey you may never find, and stay with the Mrs. Denvessey who will give you every advantage that wealth can bestow. I feel a strong interest in you, and if you accept my proposal, you shall never have cause to regret it. What say you—will you go or stay?"

"You can't mean it! O, it is too good to be true!" I cried, utterly bewildered, incapable of belief in my good fortune.

"But I do mean it," she replied, smiling gravely—"really and truly, as you children say."

I do not now remember just what words followed. Mrs. Denvessey made it plain to me that she was thoroughly in earnest, and with a grateful heart I accepted her noble offer. From that day dawned a new life. Mrs. Denvessey's interest deepened into affection, and I felt for her a love almost idolatrous. Ere a year had passed I was adopted into her heart in place of the daughter she had so fondly loved, and who had passed away in her bloom and youth, leaving the mother heartsore and desolate.

One day, two years after my adoption, Mrs. Denvessey told me the story of her life. It was then that I learned I must give up my ambition. It was Mrs. Denvessey's desire that the gift so assiduously cultivated should be used only for her gratification, and that of the society in which she destined me to shine.

"You have no need to win a fortune, Ethel," she said, "for what is mine is yours; and as for fame, it is meteoric—dazzling while it lasts, but hollow and unsatisfactory; and with your generous noble nature, the heartfelt praise of true friends would be far dearer than the applause of millions. Nor are you fitted for the life of a public singer. You are too sensitive, too truthful; you would abhor the petty artifices, the jealousies and deceptions too often surrounding the noblest in the profession. Your purity, your highmindedness, would receive many a severe shock. In fine, Ethel, I cannot conceive of a more unhappy life for you."

I was not convinced, nevertheless, but I could not persist in carrying out a plan distasteful to her to whom I owed everything. She saw that it cost me a struggle, and it endeared me to her the more.

"Your voice made your fortune, Ethel, that day when you sang for my criticism," she said, when the point was settled. "But for your ambitious dreams, you would never have left your father's home, and I should have dragged out a dreary desolate life. Your cheerful companionship, your tender affection, has been a great solace to me, and the fortune that will be yours when I pass away will be but a poor compensation. I wrong no one by bequeathing it to you. My husband had no kin, and mine are sufficiently wealthy. When I married my dear husband he was a poor barrister; I the daughter of a noble English family. My father was Lord Harcourt, who regarded the misalliance with horror. I would not give up my dear John, and as I was of age, no one could prevent our marriage. I had no mother to distress, she having died before I attained my majority. Enraged beyond measure at my marriage, my father discarded me, and used his influence to keep my husband from any employment. Disheartened and discouraged, he determined to come to this city in search of his father's brother. He carried out his plan, and found his uncle one of the wealthiest merchant princes. There had been no communication between the brothers for years, and Mr. Denvessey was greatly surprised at the meeting. He offered his nephew a position in his counting-room, and at the end of a year took him into partnership. Had my husband refused to accept the position, he would have done nothing for him, as he was bitterly opposed to the profession of law. Ten years afterward he died, leaving his immense fortune to me, to whom he was greatly attached. My married life passed without a cloud. My husband worshipped me, and the daughter that had come to bless our union. He was in the way of amassing another fortune when he was stricken down. I saw the two that I loved better than life drowned before my eyes. Alas! what a fearful blow that was to me, widowed and childless at one stroke! For a long time I was very ill, and small hope of my life was entertained. But I was not permitted to be so soon united to my dear ones. My work, you see, was not

done. I was to live and lift up a soul down-cast and neglected. I always felt confident that Providence intended you for my special charge."

"Have you never seen any of your family since?"

"O yes. My father willingly forgave me when I came into such a fortune, and I paid them a visit when we crossed the ocean to make the tour of Europe. I was glad that the reconciliation took place, as he died shortly afterwards. My brother succeeded to his title and estate. His daughter is the Countess of Cherbury by marriage; his son will succeed his father. My nephew Reginald has a warm affection for me. His sister is a fashionable woman of the world, devoting all her time to society, and between us there is little in common. I have written to them of you, and when we go abroad you will have a chance of making their acquaintance."

After that conversation I never again referred to my ambitious dream. I could better understand that it would wound my benefactress deeply to have her adopted child enter upon a professional life. Aristocracy is deep-rooted, and she shared the prejudices of her class. After a time I ceased to be unhappy about it, taking the goods the gods provided, and the two years intervening before my eighteenth birthday passed pleasantly, and in the ardent pursuit of knowledge. The intellectual food my soul had so long craved was mine. Music was my passion, and I studied it with an enthusiasm that delighted my masters. To my intense delight I found that I could compose. A rare old poem that I had read one afternoon recurred to me as I sat improvising, and the desire to set the words to music seized me. I rejected one and another improvisation. None seemed to suit the exquisite beauty and tender pathos of the words. I gave up at last, discouraged and vexed.

That night in my dreams I was still trying to succeed in my desire. O joy! I was at last triumphant. I played it over and over again, and each time was more and more enraptured by the delicious melody. But when I endeavored to copy it everything became faint and indistinct. When I awoke my dream was the first thing to occur to me, but I could not recall that entrancing melody; *mais voilà!* when about half way through breakfast it flashed into my mind

with sudden and distinct vividness. I rushed from the table post haste, startling Mrs. Denvessey greatly. She followed me hurriedly to the music-room to inquire the cause of my strange behaviour, and stood lost in admiration.

"Isn't it delicious, mamma?" I asked, joyfully—"and so nice and obliging for my dream to come back." At which Mrs. Denvessey looked as if she believed I had suddenly gone mad.

"You see," I went on, "I wanted to set those words to music;" and then I told her of my attempt and failure the day before, and of the dream that must have been an inspiration. She shared my delight, and offered no objection to my sending the song for publication.

"For if I place it before my dear old *maestro*," I argued, "he will no doubt criticise it faithfully, but favorably, because it is mine; but for a stranger's criticism it will have to stand on its own merit;" and in this opinion Mrs. Denvessey quite agreed.

It was some time before I heard one thing or the other about my production. Then one day the letter came, containing a check for a large amount, and the request that I would send another song: the one I sent had an immense sale and was very popular.

I carried the letter to my benefactress, and she shared my exultation and pleasure, though I must say I acted like a child with a new toy; I was so overjoyed to have it accepted; and then, too, it was the first money really my own; money earned easily enough, yet still earned, and that was why I was so proud and glad.

I wished to send it to my father, but Mrs. Denvessey begged me to wait until after my eighteenth birthday, which was near at hand. Then she proposed that I should visit them, and make my present in person. I may as well state here that I did so, and found my father had been dead a little over a year, and that his relict had married again. I caused a fitting monument to be erected marking the last resting-place of my parents, and left my birthplace forever.

Mais revenons nos moutons. A birthday fête launched me into society's *creme de la creme*. Mrs. Denvessey had predicted a sensation, and Mrs. Denvessey was right. Society went mad, or pretended to, over my beauty and my voice. When it leaked out that I was the writer of "that sweet song," that was the signal for another *furor*. But

then, you see, Mrs. Denvessey's thousands backed me. Allowance must be made for that. Gold throws such a dazzling halo about one. Is it a wonder that the beholder is so blinded that he cannot see fairly? Behind my back I dare say the comments were not so flattering, if I judged from a conversation carried on between two dowagers, and of which I was an unseen listener, the heavy curtains screening me! By the way, what a convenience are those same curtains. One is forever overhearing something to his or her advantage or disadvantage; and though ignorance may be bliss, I, for one, do not believe it.

After gossiping about every one in the room, a choice bit of scandal about this one and that, I, in turn, was attacked.

"I would give a good deal to find out where Mrs. Denvessey picked her up," dowager number one put in. "Rumor has it that she is a distant connection of Denvessey, senior, the child of a second cousin, but I don't believe it."

"And you need not," dowager number two returned. "You remember Mrs. Harkins, that used to sew for Mrs. Denvessey? Well, she recognized her at once. It seems, four years ago, she boarded in a place called Derry, and she is positive that Ethel Denvessey is Ethel Marsden, the daughter of the farmer where she boarded. But you must not say a word about it, for I don't want to get Mrs. Harkins into trouble, for you see she played off she was Mrs. John Denvessey, and if my lady should find it out, she might make it unpleasant for her. So you see Ethel Denvessey is only a charity child, with all her airs and graces."

"Never mind, she is Mrs. Denvessey's adopted daughter and heiress. Without that, with her beauty—"

"Beauty!" the other scornfully interrupted. "For my part, I can't see it. Her mouth is large, her nose decidedly *retrousee*, and she hasn't a particle of color."

"Yes, but her eyes are splendid, and so is her hair. If her mouth is a trifle large, it only serves to show to better advantage her beautiful teeth; and then her blood red lips contrast favorably with her skin's marble pallor. But the chief beauty of her face lies in its ever-changing expression, its dazzling smile, and the brilliant fire in her magnificent eyes. It is quite true what Charlie Wheeler says: 'Her eyes and smile would make the plainest face handsome.' Take

her altogether, she is just the sort of woman for men to run wild over, and to be labelled 'Dangerous' if she were poor. As it is, our doors are graciously opened to receive her, and we are quite willing our sons and brothers should 'go in'—to use a slang phrase—"for the great Denvessey fortune."

"And I'm sure I'm greatly obliged," I muttered, *sotto voce*, as some one came up and interrupted the charming conversation, and I emerged from my retreat half amused and half provoked. One thing was settled, however. Mrs. Denvessey and I had tried vainly to find the Mrs. Denvessey who had first roused my ambitious dreams, and now we need search no longer.

"Whoever holds the cap of Fortunatus must expect to be envied," I mused, a little bitterly perhaps.

But my bitterness soon passed. I would not let the words of two gossiping harpies interfere with my enjoyment. Let them talk. I was the centre of attraction, and I liked it mightily. I had plenty of offers, but my heart as yet owed but one allegiance, and until I found one to love me as disinterestedly as she, there was no probability of my saying "yes."

The summer was spent partly at Long Branch, partly at Newport. I was the acknowledged belle of both watering-places. In the fall we set out for England, and at last I was to meet Mrs. Denvessey's noble relatives. "Thank heaven!" I cried, "they know the ins and outs of the story of my adoption." They had sent me a warm letter of invitation, and though I was a charity child, my blood was as *sang azure* as their own. I was descended on my father's side from a noble family. His ancestor had left England in the seventeenth century, to enjoy in the wilds of America undisturbed religious privileges. A stanch Puritan, allied by birth to a family that dated their ancestry back to William the Conqueror, his had been one of the first families in the Bay State, till, through mismanagement and thoughtless prodigality, it had sunk to its lowest state. My father, through thrift and good management, had begun to repair it, and now, by an unexpected stroke of fortune, I was raised to the rightful position my ancestry demanded. No doubt you who read may exclaim at my vanity, but I confess without a qualm that I am proud of the blue blood that flows in my veins, proud of my genealogy and ancestry.

"Her Majesty's Theatre" was crowded to its utmost capacity. From dome to parquet, tier upon tier of magnificently dressed ladies, their diamonds flashing brilliantly, fans fluttering in time to the dreamy music, eyes sparkling radiantly, rare exotics exhaling delicious perfume, the whole making a scene of life, and light, and beauty. On the stage that sweetest of singers, Nilsson, was warbling in dulcet strains her aria in *Il Trovatore*, concluding amidst a burst of applause, and a shower of floral tributes.

The curtain descending was the signal for the turning of lorgnettes in all directions. The gentlemen took advantage of it to pay their *devoirs* to the occupants of respective boxes, and the scene became more and more animated.

In the Earl of Cherbury's box were his lordship and lady, Lord Reginald Harcourt, the earl, his father, his aunt, Mrs. Denvessey, and the latter's daughter, "*La belle Americaine*." She was enjoying herself extremely, and more than one glass had been levelled at her box, and every now and then she would bend her head in return to the greetings of her numerous friends and admirers, some of whom were now entering the box to pay their *devoirs*.

Lord Reginald scowled as he watched the brisk flirtation going on between Charlie Devereaux and me, for, like most American girls, I could carry on a flirtation with tolerable grace, and if I flirted desperately that evening, it was that I knew I was disgusting his august majesty. What right had he to keep espionage over me? That he disliked me greatly was self-evident. Other titled lords had sued for my hand, but then, they believed me to be in truth Mrs. Denvessey's daughter, while he knew. Why, though, need he treat me so indifferently, so icily, when he was obliged to notice me? I had disliked him from the hour of our introduction, which he acknowledged indifferently enough, honoring me with a prolonged critical stare. My composure is wonderful, but the circumstances under which we met were peculiar, and I felt that I showed agitation. Only for a moment, and then I looked him back unflinchingly, and his eyes fell before the look in mine. But I could not forgive or forget that he had ruffled my composure, and I vowed that I would bring him to my feet.

That was three months ago, and I seem likely not to have my vow fulfilled.

"I assure you, Miss Denvessey, that I think your voice far superior to Nilsson's," Charlie Devereux was saying. "Promise me that I shall have the very great pleasure of hearing you sing at Lady Vesey's—I could listen to you forever. Don't laugh! 'pon honor, I could."

"I fear you'd find it tedious after a while," I replied, smilingly. "Confess now, to hear, to see, to experience one thing forever would be decidedly monotonous to you, if I read you aright. But there, don't attempt an explanation. I knew you meant it for a neat compliment, and I'll take it for just what it is worth, and sing you your favorite at Lady Vesey's."

"*Merçi, mademoiselle!* I wonder if all your country-women are like you? If they are, they must be awfully jolly. See how Harcourt is scowling at me!"—mischievously—"I think it was too bad of you to become engaged to him before giving the rest of us a chance. O, you needn't look so surprised and innocent—not a particle of use! I had it from the earl's own lips."

"I think you must be mistaken," I said, serious at once; and then a suspicion swept over me that made me faint and dizzy: Was that the reason of Lord Reginald's conduct? Had his father and aunt planned the match, and was he bidden to fall in love and marry me? All the pride in me was aflame at the bare thought, and yet, and yet—a thousand and one trivial circumstances seemed to corroborate Charlie Devereux's story—and then I was conscious that he was speaking to me, and that "Her Majesty's" was not the place for revelry.

He persisting that he was not mistaken, I turned the conversation, and he readily followed my lead. He saw that he had made a *faux pas*, and he was just the person to be distressed by it. The curtain rising prevented any further conversation; thenceforward I had eyes and ears only for Nilsson and her *confères*.

At Lady Vesey's that same evening, while fulfilling my promise to Charlie Devereux, I met the eyes of a courtly dignified gentleman with an unmistakable military bearing, fixed upon me. Something about the face seemed familiar. Where had I seen that face before? Shortly after the Earl of Harcourt brought him up to me.

"Ethel, my dear! Colonel Marsden desires an introduction. Colonel! I have the

honor to present to you my niece, Miss Denvessey."

I was puzzled no longer. It was the portrait of my dead and gone ancestor that Colonel Marsden resembled. He offered his arm, and we promenaded.

"Do you know, Miss Denvessey," he began, "your face strangely resembles an ancestor of mine? Hearing you are an American, I am quite sure that I am to find a relative, for the brother of the person you so wonderfully resemble emigrated to your country in the seventeenth century, but my fallacious hopes are disappointed when I hear your name."

"But what if I were to whisper a secret, and I am half inclined to? What if my name were Denvessey only by adoption, and were instead Ethel Marsden, whose ancestor settled in America at the same time yours did? You don't believe it! Ah, I see you're not so eager to claim a relative, after all."

"Pardon me, my dear Miss Denvessey, if for a moment my bewilderment surpassed every other sentiment."

"I will freely pardon you," I answered, with a merry smile; and then I told him how his face had puzzled me until I heard his name pronounced. Then we compared notes, and it turned out that he was my third cousin. He begged permission to call next day, and I gladly consented.

"Ethel, I must congratulate you on your latest conquest," Lady Cherbury said, as the carriage bowed home. Mrs. Denvessey and her brother had retired an hour earlier, and my lady and her husband, Lord Reginald and I, were the occupants of my lady's luxurious equipage.

"He has resisted the fascinations of our belles season after season"—she went on—"and now, *voilà!* he bows at your shrine. Tell me the secret of your witchery, that I may go and do likewise."

"Have pity upon me, Ethel, and refrain," the earl interposed with a laugh. "Her ladyship needs no new arts, she is potent without, and though I put up with her flirtations at present, I won't answer for my good conduct forever."

"You are a fool to put up with them at all"—his brother-in-law observed, grimly—"Marguerite should not have such license—if she were my wife—it angers me enough as it is."

"Indeed!" his sister drawled contemptu-

ously. "Take my advice and don't mind me, but take warning and marry a woman 'who'll live for you alone! But, Ethel, what was Colonel Marsden saying to you? I am dying to know! something of great interest, to judge from your faces."

"Have you forgotten, Lady Cherbury, that my name is Marsden, also? May not that account for it? It should, for it appears that we are third cousins."

She sat bolt upright, all her listlessness gone, staring at me blankly.

"Good heavens!" she said at last, "can it be possible?"

"I am not much surprised," her husband observed. "I, with others, noticed the striking resemblance."

"And of course you'll have to be romantic and fall in love with each other," Lady Cherbury said, pettishly, with a sidelong reproachful glance at her brother. "But he's more than twice your age! He's forty odd."

"That is nothing; better be an old man's darling, you know; only Colonel Marsden isn't an old man, but is young-looking for his age if he is forty odd."

"People are not in the habit of doubting my veracity, Ethel," she answered, in a tone meant to be severe. "Don't apologize, I know you meant it."

"You need not fear; I hadn't the slightest intention of apologizing for an offence that I am not guilty of. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, you know."

"Thank heaven, we are at home!" the earl devoutly exclaimed, as the carriage drew up before his stately residence; "I have always observed that the best-natured females are apt to—"

The rest of the sentence was lost as he disappeared out of the carriage. Lady Cherbury followed in high dudgeon. Silently Lord Reginald assisted me to alight. At the foot of the grand staircase I said to him:

"Charlie Devereux volunteered a piece of information this evening that demands an explanation. He asserts positively that the earl, your father, told him an engagement existed between you and myself. Of course I contradicted it, and I wish to say to you that I should have had a much higher opinion of you, if you had frankly told me that your father's desire was distasteful, hateful to you, than to show me by your words and manners that such was the case.

I, the person most interested, was left in ignorance, to find it out from strangers." And having said my say I left him standing there, thoroughly disconcerted.

The next morning Mrs. Denvessey was the recipient of my pent-up wrath.

"Don't take on so, my darling; pray don't!" she said, when I stopped out of breath with the recital of my wrongs. "Lord Harcourt and I have long cherished the plan, and it was my darling wish to unite you to me by the ties of blood. But you have wronged Reginald grievously! He has had nothing to do with the matter, and was as ignorant as yourself. It has pained the earl and myself to see you at variance with each other. My brother loves you dearly, for who can help loving you, Ethel? and, indeed, I think it is partly your own fault that Reginald—"

She hesitated with embarrassment.

"Dislikes me—" I finished promptly. "You needn't be afraid to say what I know. However, let it go for what it's worth. What an idiot I was to fly into a passion with him, for now there'll be the awkwardness of apology, and I suppose I must?"

"My dear, would it be like you not to do so? It would be the first time in my knowledge of you. But what is this Marguerite tells me about Colonel Marsden?"

"I am glad, for your sake, my darling," she said, when I told her; "but nothing could make you dearer to me."

"I am sure of that," I said, throwing my arms about her, and giving her a warm kiss.

My relationship was settled beyond a doubt that day, and that was how the truth came out in the London circles, that I was Mrs. Denvessey's adopted daughter. My popularity by no means diminished. I was still the centre of attraction, *La belle Americaine*. I won't pretend that 'it wasn't because I was a Marsden, for I am quite sure that that turned the balance in my favor. The *amende honorable* was made to Lord Reginald, and after that we got on much better together.

My handsome cousin had not followed Lady Cherbury's prediction and fallen in love with me. I was his *confidante*, you see, and *knew*. But everybody believed he had, and we did not take the trouble to deceive people.

At the close of the London season we went down to the Earl of Harcourt's country seat, situated in the county of Sussex. It was a

grand old place, and my passion for lovely scenery was here gratified. The earl presented me with a magnificent black horse, and never was I happier than when enjoying my daily canter upon "Prince's" back. At first, Colonel Marsden rode by my side, then somehow it happened that he became Lady Cherbury's escort, while her brother rode beside me.

Ever since that night when I had hurled at him those passionate words of anger, I had known the miserable truth—that I loved, with the full strength of my nature, this man who had of all others been indifferent to me. In vain did I try to conquer it. It had not come at my bidding, and therefore would not go at my bidding.

But I guarded my secret well. No one dreamed of such a remote possibility, least of all, *he*. But we were to return to America after a tour of the continent, and then, perhaps, I might learn to forget. Thus was I thinking that morning as we rode silently side by side. I dare say this was the reason that I held so loose a rein; and when Prince shied and set off on a mad gallop for no visible reason, it naturally followed that I was thrown. I was stunned, but not unconscious. Prince had been obliging enough to deposit me in the softest place he could find.

Somebody reached me almost as soon as I was thrown, and somebody cried in passionate tones as he stooped over me:

"My darling! my darling!" and actually was audacious enough to rain kisses upon me swift and fierce enough, so that I thought it necessary to open my eyes and tell him my exact condition. Of course, you know that it was Lord Reginald. The rest of the cavalcade came up, greatly scared. But as there were no broken bones their minds were set at rest. Prince was found at some

distance, quietly grazing, and behaved beautifully after his escapade, for which I could not feel sorry. But for it, I should not have known that Reginald had loved me all the time, while we were at cross purposes, for you see, he believed that I had disliked him before we had met. It was owing to Lady Cherbury, however. She had described him to me in such a way that I had impulsively declared that he must be a prig, and that I, for one, shouldn't put up with his peccadillos. This she had maliciously repeated, not through any unkind motive toward me, but for the sisterly and praiseworthy one of wounding his pride and paying him off for some of his interference in her flirtations. Thus, from the first, you see, we were fated to misunderstand each other. She was the only one who was not surprised at the announcement of our betrothal.

"I saw it long ago, especially *mon frere's* attachment," she said, with a shrug of her white shoulders. "I pity you, Ethel; you don't know what an ogre he is! No more pleasant flirtations for you, *ma belle*."

But I did not care; for, you see, I quite agree with him on the impropriety of flirtation when one is married. I have never had a desire to engage in such amusements since my marriage, which took place three months after Prince's escapade.

Mrs. Denvessey sold her property in America, and lives with her brother, Reginald and myself. We are a happy family. Only last week Colonel Marsden came down with his wife to pay us a visit. You see, she was his first love, and some one had interfered, and they were separated and she married. Her husband was obliging enough to die, the year before I met the colonel, and he was waiting till her year of mourning expired—and this is all my story.

HOW CORA LYNN LOST THE BATTLE.

Francis, Fanny

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HOW CORA LYNN LOST THE BATTLE.

BY MISS FANNY FRANCIS.

"I won't be polite to him, — I won't do my best to please him; I'll do all I can to vex and worry him! I don't want to see him; and I'll do all I can to make him wish himself anywhere else!" And the speaker stamped her foot, threw a bouquet of flowers — which she had already seriously damaged — to the other side of the room, and looked beautiful defiance.

In grave and stern surprise Mrs. Lynn stood regarding her niece. She knew that Cora was wild, high-spirited, and self-willed; but she had not expected such an outburst as this on being told that a man, young, handsome, and wealthy, needed only fair

encouragement to become a willing wooer. Surely such unreasonable rebellion must arise from great ignorance. The girl was very young; she had been brought up, in this secluded spot on the coast of Devonshire, with few companions but her favorite dogs, and little reading save what she selected for herself from the old-fashioned library. A little diplomacy might make her see things in an altogether different light.

"Cora," said Mrs. Lynn mildly, "I think you are exciting yourself quite needlessly, and behaving in a very childish manner. You surely do not want Mr. Proctor to sup-

pose that Devonshire girls of seventeen or eighteen are about on an intellectual level with London girls of twelve?"

"I don't care what he thinks," declared Cora; "he is no more to me than some parcel of goods that you may have sent for."

"Cora, try to be calm. You are really acting and talking most absurdly. You know nothing about Mr. Proctor, who is a man of great attainments. He took high honors at Oxford, and has traveled all over the Continent and in the East. He is coming here by my invitation and by the wish of his father, who, as I have already told you, had the greatest regard for your father, and would be only too happy if in his daughter his son could find a congenial wife. Why, then, should you deliberately try to make yourself disagreeable to your cousin? You are all but portionless; he is not only rich, but, from all I hear, a man likely to be able to make you happy. I simply ask you to consider these things, and behave as any sensible young lady would behave under the circumstances, and you turn upon me with the petulance of a child, throw things about, and do not suffer me to speak without interruption. Truly, Cora, you both astonish and wound me, — you do indeed."

Neither the matter nor the manner of these speeches was likely to produce a favorable impression upon an impetuous and sensitive girl, already in a by no means mild temper; and, if this was a specimen of Mrs. Lynn's diplomacy, it would not have won her a high place in circles where diplomacy is regarded as a valuable art.

Cora, who had with difficulty kept silent during her aunt's harangue, now answered passionately, —

"I dare say I do astonish you; and I'm glad of it. You astonish me! Ah! you may stare, Aunt Lynn; but I tell you that, child or not — and I would far rather be a child than such a 'young lady' as you would make me — I shall not do one thing to make this cousin of mine patronize me! I don't want his money, and, if he expects to fill up the autumn, when town is empty, by amusing himself with a flirtation at my expense, why, you had better tell him to go somewhere else. I don't understand flirtation, and I am not to be trotted out and 'made over' to my cousin because you and his father have put your heads together about it.

I shall just snub him. I mean what I say. So now, if you don't choose to countermand your invitation, you know what your guest has to expect."

With that she called to a large wolf-dog that was lying near the open window, and laid her hand upon the door.

"Cora," said Mrs. Lynn sternly, "you utterly forget yourself. I shall write to your father by the next post."

"You can if you like," was the impudent reply; "but you had better write to my paragon cousin and tell him to keep away. Come, Luath!"

Without another word she walked out of the room and into the grounds, followed by half a dozen dogs beside Luath, and presently seated herself on the trunk of a fallen tree in the wood half a mile away from the old red-brick mansion. She was flushed and trembling still with passion, and hot tears fell upon Luath's head as she strung together field-flowers, hardly knowing what she was doing, and hung them round his neck, he regarding her meanwhile with loving, wondering eyes.

"I won't be treated so!" she cried, biting her lip till the blood almost came. "Aunt Lynn shall find that I am too old to be put in leading-strings; father never treated me so. Because he has gone to India, and she has come to take care of me, she fancies she can make a puppet of me and put me up for sale. I'll snub Allan Proctor till I make her mad, and him too!"

This resolution evidently afforded the young lady considerable satisfaction, for she grew a little calmer, and the angry flush on her face gradually abated, and the almost stern expression of the lips gave place to an expression of pain and perplexity; the flowers she had plucked up violently by the roots dropped from her fingers, and she fell into a revery in which there was little repose, to judge by the face and the restless movement of the slender fingers tapping her knee. Her thoughts were not very amiable; she was not brooding repentantly over her disrespectful speech to her aunt, but meditating on the line of action she should pursue with her cousin in order to render herself as obnoxious to him as possible.

It was not a very dignified mode of proceeding for a young lady between seventeen and eighteen; but that reflection did not occur to Cora Lynn; nor did it occur to her —

being singularly wanting in feminine vanity—that it might not be as easy as she imagined to make herself “disagreeable.” The servants might tell her that she was beautiful, praise her bright eyes, her rich complexion, her wealth of chestnut hair,—she never paid any attention to such remarks; and, though she was not altogether unconscious of her beauty, she never thought nor cared about it, and quite forgot to reckon it as an enemy to her plan of “snubbing” her cousin. Yet, as she sat there in her neat morning dress, with her large brown wistful eyes, her small nobly balanced head, her long soft curls falling about her with the freedom of childhood, her delicately cut mouth, and picture-like complexion, dark and clear, and slightly tinged with color, the very attitude of the slim figure full of grace and the freedom of one unused to the artificial restraints of “young-ladyism,” she was indeed a “thing of beauty,” and most men would have smiled at the idea that she could make herself obnoxious. Cora, however, was fully persuaded of her powers in this respect, and, though she had never before made herself disagreeable, she was resolved to make this experiment upon her cousin Allan Proctor.

Mr. Proctor was expected to arrive in two days' time, and Mrs. Lynn did not write and countermand his visit; nor did she make any further allusions to him till the day he was to come, when she said to her niece,—

“Mr. Proctor is coming to-day, Cora. He will arrive about three o'clock; so don't go rambling ten miles away.”

Cora, who at the moment was reading by the window, made no reply, but immediately rose up, called to her dogs, and ran off down the lawn.

Half an hour later one of the servants reported that Miss Cora had been seen walking along the cliffs; and Mrs. Lynn felt certain that her perverse niece had deliberately gone for one of her long rambles. She had been puzzled from the time—six months before—that she had come to take charge of her brother-in-law's child while he went back to India to finish his term of service; she had let her go her own way, as her father had done, and a very wild way it was. The first attempt at restraint had been met by Cora with an opposition that had put a stop to all further effort. Now,

however, Mrs. Lynn had determined to make another endeavor; and again she had failed.

“It's really disgraceful,” said Mrs. Lynn, as she went to attire herself to receive her guest, “to let girls run wild this way. At seventeen Cora is a mere child, and as untamed as a young colt. What could Henry have been about?”

The sun was moving toward the west when a tall, slim young figure came at an easy stride through the shrubbery at Alton End, followed by three great shaggy dogs. The figure was attired in a striped Swiss cotton dress, laid open loosely at the throat with a wide collar; the garment was torn in two or three places, its owner having scrambled through hedges in her rambles; a large bough of may was carried in the arms of the wanderer, her hat hung down her back, and her rich curling hair was tumbled all about her. Altogether Cora Lynn, who wished to show disregard of the guest, formed as picturesque a study as the most exacting artist could have desired. As she came to the kitchen entrance she was met by one of the servants in a state of excitement.

“O Miss Cora! Mr. Proctor has come. Do run up and dress before the mistress sees you. He's been here since three,—such a handsome gentleman!—and your aunt has been asking where you were.”

“Don't make a fuss,” said Cora coolly. “I shall dress when I have put my may in water, not before. Don't send Meg up: I'll ring when I'm ready for her.”

The defiant look had come into the large eyes again, and she went up-stairs whistling, with her torn dress, her tumbled hair, her great trailing bough of may, and her dogs. As she reached the hall she heard voices approaching, and deliberately paused. If this was Allan Proctor, she would show him how little she cared for him by receiving him in this disorderly guise. The next moment, through the open hall door, came her aunt in violet satin and cap rich with Honiton lace, and with her a tall, slight man in fashionable London attire; a fair and very handsome man with curly hair, which the sun's rays lighted into gold, and large brilliant blue eyes. One glance only Cora gave to him, though that glance pleased her; and so she did not see the admiration in his eyes, veiled but not hidden by the high-breeding which forbids a gen-

tleman to display open admiration of a lady. Poor Cora! He thought of nothing but her beauty as she stood there, with her bough of white and green setting off her dark hair and soft complexion and bright eyes. But her aunt saw the conventional shortcomings of the interview, and her stern frown was not lost upon Cora. It gave her great delight.

"Back at last, Cora?" said Mrs. Lynn cheerfully. "A pretty plight you're in to meet your cousin! Allan, you must forgive Cora. She never pays any regard to forms and ceremonies."

"It is an easy task to forgive so pretty a plight," said Mr. Proctor, holding out his hand and smiling.

There was something singularly soft and tender in his manner, and his refined accent and musical voice smote pleasantly on Cora's ears; but she mentally set her teeth in the resolve not to give him a cordial welcome, and gave him her hand without an answering smile and with an indifferent air that must have repelled him but for her winning beauty. He did not seem, however, to notice it, but glanced keenly at her, and turned to caress her dogs, who did not seem to share their young mistress's antipathy, but frisked joyously about him. Cora turned away.

"I shall soon be ready," she said, addressing her aunt and ignoring her cousin's presence. "Come, old boys!" to the dogs, — for these four-footed favorites were permitted free entrance even to her dressing-room, — and forthwith she went up-stairs.

"Incorrigible!" muttered the angry Mrs. Lynn.

But Allan Proctor, who gave no sign of having heard the remark, observed, —

"Portraits never do full justice. The child is beautiful! I must get her to let me draw her in crayons. Put her on the walls of the Academy as she stood just now, and the picture would be the sensation of the season."

Mrs. Lynn thought it very kind of Allan Proctor to overlook Cora's rudeness; but he had spoken in good faith. He was a thorough artist, and no mean executant; and Cora would have hardly felt satisfied with herself if she had known how great an impression for good she had made on her cousin, — how her likeness more than anything else had induced him to accept Mrs. Lynn's invitation to Alton End, although he knew

very well that she was laying a matrimonial trap for him.

Cora did not summon Meg at all, but dressed herself, choosing the ugliest dress she could find, — though the ugliest was pretty, as she had really no inartistic dresses to wear. She tried to make herself "look bad," as she termed it; but that was impossible, and the result was that she came down to dinner looking as beautiful as ever. She thought Allan Proctor, with his London notions of fashionable harmony, would dislike violent contrasts and "loud" colors; so she put on a scarlet bodice, — her dress was lilac, — and fastened a yellow ribbon among her curls. But all this made her look picturesque, though it would have been a dangerous experiment for an ordinary young lady.

Mrs. Lynn was thoroughly displeased with her niece. She saw that her costume had been deliberately selected, for she knew that Cora was usually critically fastidious about colors. Cora's conduct did not afford any ground for overlooking her shortcomings in dress. She sat perfectly silent, unless addressed, and then she replied as shortly as possible. She fed the dogs, — a freak she never indulged in at other times, — and, though she could not bring herself to be guilty of solecisms in table manners, her general behaviour was anything but courteous to her guest, and respectful to her aunt. Proctor, however, did not speak much to her, — addressing his conversation almost entirely to Mrs. Lynn; and this, instead of piquing, pleased Cora.

After dinner she sauntered out to the terrace, and presently descended to the lawn, leaving her aunt to entertain the guest. Seating herself under a tree, she called her dogs around her, and proceeded to make garlands for them — her favorite occupation — as coolly as if Allan Proctor were a myth.

While thus engaged, she became so absorbed in plans for future disagreeable manifestations that she did not hear any one approach, and Luath, bounding forward with a joyous bark, first gave intimation of the presence of an intruder. She looked up, and Allan Proctor's fair, handsome face smiled down upon her. It was hard not to smile in answer, — it was such a noble, winning face, and looked so kind and gentle despite her late rudeness. But Cora had steeled her young heart, and, instead of a smile, something like a frown darkened her

brow; then, without a word, she dropped her eyes on her garland again.

"Bonnie cousin mine," said Proctor, speaking to the girl as if he had known her a long time, — was he not her cousin? — but with a certain chivalrous deference of manner which she did not fail to observe, "I hope I may be forgiven for seeking you out in your sylvan haunt. Your face just now did not give encouragement. Am I wrong?"

Cora colored deeply, but without looking up replied carelessly, —

"You can stay here if you like. Come here, Luath, and have this wreath put on."

With a smile lurking about his curved lips, Proctor threw himself upon the grass at his cousin's feet, and caressed Bar, the bloodhound, who came and lay down by him. Was he waiting for Cora to speak? If he was, he was disappointed, for she never said a word, but sat in the calm, warm evening air with anything but calm feelings in her heart. Proctor spoke at length, and his peculiarly sweet-toned voice ought to have soothed her; but it did not.

"You don't seem to feel very sociable. Cora," he said. "Won't you even answer a few questions, if I am inquisitive enough to ask them?"

"Do you want to know what crops we grow about here, when the tide ebbs and flows, what my dogs' names are, and whether I am a visiting lady?" asked Cora, weaving a carnation into her wreath. "Because, if you do, I don't know anything about crops, though I am a country girl, and I am not a visiting lady."

"Thank you, dear," said Allan Proctor, with provoking coolness; "but I did n't want to ask any of the questions you have so obligingly anticipated. Perhaps I had better leave unasked the questions I had intended to put. By the way, you have n't answered all that you put to yourself, for you have not told me when the tide ebbs and flows, nor what your dogs' names are."

Cora bit her lip, and bent low over her wreath to hide the scarlet flush that rose to her brow, and her cousin saw that her hands trembled.

Proctor played with the grass, caressed the dogs, and furtively watched the deft fingers weaving the flowers, scanned the beautiful features, taking in every line and curve, and quietly enjoyed himself.

Presently Cora rose.

"I shall go in now," she said shortly. "Come, Bar, — come on, old Luath!"

She did not even look at her cousin. His pleasant voice arrested her steps for a moment.

"May we not have some music, Cora? It is my special hobby."

Cora both sang and played well. — music was her favorite study, — but she answered ungraciously, —

"Not tonight. I don't play much, and I don't suppose you would care for my singing, — I'm not a Patti or a Nilsson."

She went into the house. If she had seen the look of pain in Proctor's blue eyes she might have relented; but she did not see it, and he said no more.

He did not enter the drawing-room till more than half an hour later, and then he took up a book, and for a while left Cora to her own devices. Presently he laid aside the book, and went to the piano, — a fine grand. He was an accomplished performer, and, without book, played pieces by Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Chopin. Cora — apparently occupied with "Adam Bede" — was entranced. She did not move, nor lift her head; but her heart was filled with delight as the rich music swelled through the large rooms. Suddenly the thought came to her, —

"He is trying to make me amiable by attacking me in a weak point."

She rose at once, threw down her book, and abruptly quitted the room. Proctor finished the piece he was playing, closed the piano, and smiled.

"Poor child!" he said to himself. "She plays her part badly; but I must try for victory. She is worth the winning."

But Cora Lynn was not easily subdued. For several days she followed the same line of conduct. Her aunt attempted to take her severely to task, but was fain to leave her alone, for Cora told her passionately that if she interfered with her she would go away all day, and not come back till late in the evening, or plainly tell her cousin he was *de trop*, and, being a gentleman, he would be compelled to leave.

Proctor, for his part, was provokingly kind, gentle, and considerate; he never resented the rudest of speeches, he took no offence at the most direct snubs, he did not obtrude his society on his young cousin, — but was always willing to do anything for her.

Cora, however, as she found herself growing more and more to like the young man, became less sociable, and steeled herself against any softening influence, — indeed, she seemed so committed to this line of conduct now that she could not abandon it without losing dignity, proclaiming herself defeated, and telling her cousin in effect that she had grown to like him. To maintain her obdurate demeanor toward her winning cousin, she continually required to fan the flame of her resentment by recalling her aunt's language, and reflecting on the cruel injustice done to her, and the insolence of a man coming to "view" a wife, as if she were an article for sale.

"Why does he stay?" she would say to herself. "He must see that he is not wanted. I wish he would go. I am sure he does not want for hints. He can't stop for auntie, I know. I won't be civil to him, — and there 's an end of it!"

Speaking thus one day mentally, but stamping her foot literally, she heard Proctor's voice uttering her name.

"Cora," he said softly, "Cora!"

She turned with a start, to meet him face to face.

"It is a splendid day," he said, smiling. "Won't you be kind to me for once, and have a ramble over the crags with me before I go?"

The girl looked at him. There was no sparkle of triumph in his eyes, no mocking line about the handsome mouth. She might have yielded then if it had not been for his closing words, "before I go." The sudden sinking at her heart made Cora set her teeth hard, and answer, half sullenly, —

"I have something else to do; I can't come, Cousin Proctor," — she always used his surname.

"Very well. Good-by, then. I sha' n't trouble you much longer, my bonnie coz."

He turned away, and vanished among the trees; and then Cora ran away, and, hiding herself, sobbed as if her heart would break. An hour later she called Bar, and went out for a long ramble, going inland, because she thought Proctor had gone to the cliffs, — Luath, who had that morning been lamed with a thorn, and who had not yet recovered, was left behind.

When Proctor returned to the house at sunset, Cora was not yet in.

"She is often as late as this," said her aunt, "and later too: I suspect she has

gone toward the brook, — it is a favorite walk of hers."

"The brook that is dammed up at the mill that you showed me a week or two ago?" interrogated Proctor.

"The same."

He said no more, but went out again, and this time took his way toward the brook.

The dusk was falling over the landscape as he struck into the wide meadow at the foot of which Aston brook flowed tranquilly. As he did so the deep baying of a blood-hound smote upon his ear. He paused one second with whitening lips, and then, breaking into a fleet run, was in two minutes at the bottom of the meadow.

What was this? The brook that usually flowed so gently was tearing past like a mill-race, foaming and leaping and overflowing its banks, and across the angry flood came again the baying of the hound, straight from a little island all covered with trees and underwood, where Cora had passed many a summer noon.

She stood now upon its verge, looking down into the stream, a perfect picture, with her long rich curls floating round her, and her hands locked; her attitude was half timid, half defiant, but without fear, even in this position of difficulty, possibly of peril.

The deep bay of the dog changing to a joyous bark made her look up, to see her cousin's tall figure on the opposite bank. She flushed deeply, but called out directly, —

"The dam is broken, — that's all. I would cross, but that I fear I might get swept away; and Bar is n't so strong as Luath, or he should take me."

She was turning away, when Proctor's voice arrested her steps.

"How long have you been an involuntary Crusoe?" he said, seeing that there was no danger.

"Four hours. It was all right when I came, and suddenly began rushing like that."

"What do you mean to do then?"

"Perhaps it will go down presently, — I'll wait and see," said Cora. "I'm quite safe with Bar. Besides, no one can get across."

"Nonsense. — it is barely three feet deep; but the current would carry you away like a cockle-shell."

"It looks grand!" said the girl, again looking down at the seething waters.

"It is grand enough; but you can't remain there all night, bonnie coz. You must let me help you over. I can keep my feet, I think; if not, — well, we must find some other means."

"No," she said hastily. "Please leave me. I shall do very well."

"Till the dam is built up," said Proctor coolly, "or till some country bumpkin passes and can help you over the stream? I don't want to lay greater claim to the right to help you than a chance bumpkin has, but I think I am better able, being not only strong but active and sure footed. I don't want you to thank me, Cora; I only want you to have a little common sense. It is worse than folly to stop where you are. As a gentleman, as a man, how can I leave you?"

Cora saw the force of his words. She hesitated, a flush of shame crimsoning her cheeks and brow. She had no fear for him, and Proctor detected easily the motive that kept her silent. Taking action at once, the young man stepped down into the stream. Involuntarily the girl clasped her hands as she saw him do so; but a moment showed that her cousin was too strong for the angry waves. In three more seconds he was by her side.

"Come," he said, smiling. "I think I can keep you out of the water, — you are a light weight."

"No, no, — you must have a hand free," the girl told him hurriedly.

"There is no danger, my dear child, for either you or me."

His perfect confidence was re-assuring. Cora was fearless for herself; her apprehension had been for him. He took her up in his arms and stepped back into the stream, Bar, with a joyous bark, following suit. In two minutes more, Proctor had gently placed his young cousin on *terra firma*, dry-footed.

She looked up at him, flushing deeply.

"You are very kind," she said, in a low voice. "Thank you, Proctor."

"I promised to ask no reward, Cora," remarked Proctor, smiling, "and I must keep my word; and yet" —

"Yet what?" she said. "But please get home quickly. You will catch cold, — you are dreadfully drenched."

"Pooh! I am right enough; but we had

better hurry home, for your aunt will be anxious. Would you," he added, as they struck across the meadow, "think I asked too much if I requested you to come out with me tomorrow for one ramble along the cliffs before I leave? I go in a few days, you know."

"I will come," said Cora, tears blinding her eyes. She could not have uttered a word more.

Proctor glanced at the fair young face, and suppressed a sigh. What if — Unconsciously he strode more rapidly forward, and crushed an inoffensive dandelion as if it had been his worst enemy.

Poor Cora! She was more unhappy than ever that evening. After the service he had rendered her on that day, it was impossible to treat her cousin as she had treated him before, and yet she shrank with something like terror from making the *amende honorable*. He, however, did not presume upon his claims to her consideration. He did not ask for music, he did not speak to her more than usual, and when they were separating for the night he went up to her, as she stood moodily by the window looking out at the sea, and held out his hand with his customary gentle "Good-night, Cora."

Usually she simply replied coldly "Good-night," sometimes resigning her hand to him for a second, sometimes not even looking round. On this night her heart beat fast, her lips trembled, her eyes were full. She longed to say "Please forgive me;" but the words would not come. She flushed and paled in a breath, and kept her face turned to the window; for she dared not let him see it.

"Good-night," Proctor's soft voice repeated, without a shade of reproach in his tone. He saw the struggle. Was it only a child's sorrow and shame because of injustice, or was it something more, that kept her silent and motionless?

She stretched out her hand then, and laid it in his.

"Good-night, Cousin Proctor," she said, in a whisper, — for she could not trust her usual voice.

His slight fingers closed round the little hand; he held it for a second, and then, acting perhaps on the impulse of the moment, drew its owner toward him, and, stooping, kissed her forehead.

She did not resent his conduct, but the color rushed over her face, and a strange,

terrified look came into her eyes. Whatever the light that had been let in upon her heart,—whether entirely from without, or partly also from within,—her cousin left it to do its own work, and, turning away, he quitted the room.

The next morning was bright and sunny,—a glorious autumn day,—and early as Cora was in the breakfast-room, Proctor was there before her, reading Shakspeare. He greeted her with his usual smile, rising to shake hands with her, as always; and Cora, feeling ashamed in his presence, stole out to the terrace, and there remained until her aunt came down.

After breakfast Mrs. Lynn rose, and, turning to Proctor, said,—

“Must you really leave us so soon, Alvan? Cannot you stop at Alton End a little longer?”

“I fear not: nay,” he added, laughing slightly, “I think I am *de trop*.”

Mrs. Lynn’s face flushed angrily. Cora rose abruptly, and went to the window; her eyes were dim again, her lips trembling: she was ready to burst into tears. But she would not give way, and for many moments after Mrs. Lynn had left the room she stood there, till she felt that her face would not betray her; then she looked round. Proctor was reading Shakspeare again.

“When do you wish to go out?” she asked.

He looked up.

“Whenever you like, Cora; or not at all, if you would rather not.”

“No: I have made a promise, and I will keep it.”

She left the room, Bar and two or three other dogs following her.

Then a troubled shadow fell on Proctor’s fine face. He threw down the Shakspeare, and got up and paced the room slowly until she came back.

“If in vain,” he said to himself,—“if in vain! Have I been rash? She is such a child! And must I break my heart over such a dream as this? Ay! the die is cast: her picture brought me here, and she herself has kept me here. Here she is.”

She came in with her hat placed carelessly over her rich curls, the hands guiltless of gloves, and her dogs at her heels, as always; she hardly moved without them.

“We will go out this way,—by the terrace,” she said.

They stepped through the French win-

dow, crossed the lawn, and were soon on the cliffs.

“Where are you going, Cora?” Proctor asked presently, after they had traversed about half a mile in silence.

“I don’t know,” said the girl, without raising her eyes. “I came with you,—not you with me.”

“Ah! but the lady always leads. However, if you wish me to be guide,—why, I propose the overhanging rock at Errington, about a mile farther on. It gives such a splendid view of the sea.”

“Very well,” agreed Cora.

And little more was said till the Hanging Rock, as it was called, was reached. There was a low bench within about twelve feet of the verge of the cliff, and on this they both sat down, and Proctor began carelessly tracing figures in the sand with his stick.

Miss Lynn soon grew restless. She was too troubled in mind to enjoy the beauty of the view, or be exhilarated by the warm sun and balmy air, and too embarrassed in her cousin’s presence to resist the temptation to run away for a time.

“Come, Bar and Bran,” she called, jumping up. “I am going for a run down that slope, Proctor.”

And away she went, running fleetly for a little distance, but presently dropping into a saunter.

Proctor stopped his figure-drawing for a moment, and looked after her, with a curious smile creeping over his lips, and then he went on dreamily with his employment. He never offered to follow her.

So ten minutes, perhaps a quarter of an hour, passed, and then Cora, who had vanished over the cliff, came slowly back, swinging a long piece of sea-weed in one hand, while the other held a bunch of wild-flowers and heather that she had plucked. She came right up to the bench, and paused; her shadow fell across Proctor, and he looked up.

“Well,” he said coolly, “back at last.”

And he went on with some geometrical sign.

Cora’s eyes followed the point of the stick, and she thought vaguely of Blaise Pascal working out geometrical problems in the dust of his lumber-room floor; but she did not move.

Bar went up to Proctor, and rubbed his nose against him, planting the mark of his paw over an elegant triangle.

"A new sign in geometry," observed Allan, caressing the dog, and idly commencing a fresh triangle. "Do you want to leave this spot, Cora?"

"No," she replied, looking out to sea, "I don't care to move; I came out because you asked me."

"Thank you," said her cousin gravely; "it was very kind of you. Perhaps it will be long before I see it again,—if ever,—for I shall be going away on the day after tomorrow."

"Why?" asked the girl, as he paused.

She thought that she must say something, but she asked the question quite aimlessly. She began to pull her sea-weed to pieces to hide the trembling of her hands.

"Why?" repeated Proctor, still tracing patterns in the sand, but giving a swift glance at her half-averted face. "Is n't that rather an odd question for you, pretty coz? You have not given me many temptations to remain."

He spoke the words carelessly. The girl's face flushed scarlet, but she would not utter a syllable to exonerate herself. She could not ask him to forgive her. Still pursuing his employment, Proctor went on, after a pause,—and now his voice, always soft, had in it something pleading that belied its half-mocking accent.

"How have I offended you, Cora? What have I done to merit your disapproval? I have tried to win your favor, but you will not grant me a kind word or look. Do you dislike me?"

"No," she said, turning away her face; "I like you well enough. I will try to like you better, if you will."

"Is that all? Then I am too exacting," he said.

"What do you want?" asked Cora, not knowing exactly what words she had uttered.

The answer was spoken very low.

"I would rather you loved me, Cora."

It might have been only a cousin's speech, but Cora felt that the words carried a deeper significance. What did he mean?

Her heart rose up with a sudden bound, then seemed to stand still, and then beat wildly. She kept her face resolutely turned toward the sea. She was conscious, as if in a dream, that the soft wind was fanning her, and fluttering her hair. She was not conscious that her flowers and sea-weed had fallen at her feet.

Bar came up to her, and licked her clenched hands, and she let her fingers wander over his rough, honest head. What was it that was slipping away from her? What new knowledge was filling her being with strange joy, with strange fear?

"Cora," said Proctor, standing up, and throwing off all his assumed careless languor of tone and manner, and speaking with passionate earnestness, as a man speaks who lays his life at a woman's feet, "I know what it is that has risen up between you and me,—I know that you have been cruelly wronged. You were told, when I came here,—I can divine that, though I have not heard it in words,—that I came to win a bride, that I was rich, that you were portionless,—ah, your face would confirm my words if your manner to me had had not told the truth!—that you were to strive to please, not to repel me. You thought that I came here as a conqueror comes to a city that has no defences, secure of an easy victory, and you rebelled against the double insult to your womanhood and to your conscious innocence of the base motives to carry out such a scheme for your future peace. You dreaded to show me even ordinary courtesies, which might have seemed to me like participation in the plan your aunt has formed for you. But, ah, Cora! did it never occur to you that this was the surest way to win me? If you had been what they wanted you to be, I should have quitted this place in two days, and forever. I staid from day to day, trying to win the heart that you were steeling against me. Cora, hear me! As you have a true woman's heart, I entreat you to cast aside the rankling thought of this miserable plot! Let me plead my cause unfettered. Before I came here my father spoke to me of you; he had loved your father like a brother. He showed me your picture, and when I saw your face, Cora, I looked for the first time on a face that I could love. I told my father that I would come here to please him, and in my heart was the hope, almost the prayer, that you might be all that by your face you seemed to be. You are all this to me, and much more, Cora. And now I implore you once more to remove from your mind every thought that would fetter its freedom. All that a man can live for in the circle of heart and home I am laying in your hands. You are young,—you are almost a child, you may think,—but you are all

the world to me! For your own heart's sake, do not trifle with me!"

Cora had drawn back a few steps when her cousin began to speak, clasping her hands over her breast, and turning toward him a face strangely pale at first, but over which a rich crimson gradually crept, till cheeks and brow were suffused, while the quivering of the parted lips and the rapid breathing told their own tale, and in the large eyes was somewhat of fear, — the fear of a fawn startled in fancied security, of a child awakened to the knowledge that to one man in the world she is a child no longer.

Wondering, bewildered, her heart in a tumult of joy and grief, with a keen sense of the injustice that had been done to him, her tongue might have failed her but for his concluding words. Trifle with him! Play with a man's true love! No, no; she had not done that; he could not think it! She clasped her hands suddenly before her eyes, and dropped on one knee, bursting into bitter weeping, into passionate words.

"Not that! not that! You know I have never trifled with you. I have done wrong, very wrong. Please forgive me! try to forgive me. But you will not believe that I could be so wicked?"

"Cora, my darling!" He bent down and raised her, and clasped her to his breast. "It is you who have been wronged, not I. I have nothing to forgive, nothing to ask for, except your love, if you can give it fully, freely!"

Had she not given it? She knew it now, as, half shrinking from his embrace, half clinging to him, she hid her face and tried to give him the answer he sought.

But he seemed to understand her, though still a little anxious, fearful lest, child almost as she was, she should have been rather startled into an acknowledgment of love for him than convinced by her own heart. He drew her to his side, and, still holding her close to him, lifted to his own the face she would fain have kept hidden.

"Cora," he said wistfully, "I want to reach the truth. I have been hasty. I should not have asked you for an answer now. Give it me in a few days — a week — when you choose. You are so young. You have been so isolated. It would break my heart if you should discover too late that you have made a fatal mistake. Let me leave you for a while."

"No, no!" she interrupted. "I know it all now. I" — her voice fell to a whisper, and she shunned his wistful look — "I do love you, Allan. I want no time. Do you believe me?"

The kiss that he pressed on her lips was enough; and Cora was all but perfectly happy in the assurance that her love was no longer doubted, — all but perfectly happy, not quite. The girl's sensitive spirit still chafed under the knowledge that she had been unjust.

"Allan," she said presently, "it makes me unhappy to think of the manner in which I have behaved to you. I would have drawn back after a time, but I could not. Even when you carried me over the brook, it seemed so ungrateful to go on as before; but to alter my conduct was much more difficult than ever. I seemed afraid of you; and then I thought — I feared!" —

"You feared I should believe you were learning to love me?" supplied her cousin, smiling, as she faltered and paused.

"Yes, Allan."

"Poor little one! Well, never mind. I bear you no malice for all your pretty haughty ways. You have repaid me so handsomely that you leave me no ground of complaint. And now you are sure that you don't mind even Aunt Lynn's triumph?"

"No," said Cora softly; "I don't mind anything now. You have forgiven me, and that is quite enough."

"Or you me? Which is it, coz? Because, after all, I did come to seek a bride, only I did not come in the *Cæsar* vein, '*Veni, vidi, vici.*'"

"That makes all the difference," Cora observed innocently.

And so the time passed, as such golden times do pass.

The sun was sinking when Allan Proctor and his young cousin returned to the house. Mrs. Lynn met them in the hall.

"You have made a day of it," she said, adding to Proctor as Cora ran away, "I hope she has made your last day more pleasant to you, Allan."

"She has made it," declared Proctor, "the happiest day of my life. Don't be amazed. And, my dear hostess, may I offer you a little bit of advice? The next time you have a young, high-spirited girl to look after, don't tell her to be a ripe cherry to drop into the mouth of the first well-to-do

cavalier that comes her way;" and with a bow he passed her by, leaving her dumb with astonishment.

Cora Proctor is the belle of the season. At Paris and Vienna she is called "*la belle Proctor*." But wealth and dignity have not spoiled her. She is happiest—girl-bride that she is—when she gets down to the sea-side with her husband, and roams along the cliffs; and one of her greatest delights is to have a romp with her dogs in

the surf, she bare-footed and drenched with spray, and Allan sometimes asks her when she means to be grave.

"I don't know," she says on one such occasion, shaking her long curls as she stands with the water washing round her ankles, and Bar expectant by her side: "not while I can enjoy a dance by the sea; and, though I am more than twenty now, I don't feel like a woman. Come, Bar and Luath, another race!"

HOW I WON MY WIFE.

Whitney, Emma J

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HOW I WON MY WIFE.

BY EMMA J. WHITNEY.

It was in the heart of rose-crowned June that I brought my bonny bride home. How lovely she was in her bridal robes of snowy white, looking more like an inhabitant of heaven than one of earth! Ah! how fond and proud I was of my darling! and how very, very thankful I was that I had won this rarest of all rare treasures!

But there was one thorn among my roses; and that was, that Pearl—how well the name suited her dainty beauty!—had always shrunk from my caresses, and was even more shy now than before our marriage.

I puzzled in vain over the mystery, saying impatiently,—

“Theo Cameron, why not take the gifts the gods provide with thankfulness? Pearl is only seventeen, shy and retiring; and you are twenty-five, and, like your Scottish

ancestors, naturally reserved. She must think you are a great, rough bear.”

And I looked at my six feet of height and broad shoulders angrily.

Alas! my eyes had been rudely opened; and, too late, I found I had taken an unwilling bride. There was a dreary pain in my heart as I thought how my darling must have suffered during my brief courtship and our two weeks of marriage.

“Mrs. Alstynne must have known,” I thought bitterly. “I can never forgive the woman.”

I was a quiet, reserved sort of fellow, hiding my deepest feelings; but my fortitude gave way as I thought, and great tears rolled down my cheeks, and deep sobs shook my frame.

“O Pearl! little Pearl!” I groaned, “why did you not tell me? I would have made

any sacrifice for your happiness, I love you so. I love you so."

I heard her light step in the hall, and I hastily sprang through the low window, and took my way to the woods that stood cool and calm a mile away; for I wanted to think what to do, and the note I had read burned in letters of fire on my heart.

It was an accident that placed Pearl's secret in my hands, for I hold a wife's notes sacred.

I arrived home several hours earlier than I had intended, for I had been called away some miles on business. Going at once to my wife's room, I found her absent, and sat down to await her. I was thinking what a lucky chap I was in possessing such a dainty bride, when the wind blew a paper at my feet. I picked it up carelessly, when my name caught my eye, and, before I was aware of what I was doing, I read the following:—

"COUSIN JACK,—Pray, pray do not write me any more. You don't know how unhappy it makes me to have you say such dreadful things; and don't forget that I am not your little sweetheart now, but a married woman. I hope you will love some one better than you did me, and be very happy. Good-by. PEARL."

What should I do? Like an inspiration came the thought, that I would see my rival, and know with what manner of person I had to deal, for I was firmly resolved to win my pale darling's heart. It might be a hard struggle; but I would shrink from no trial or heed no suffering that would give me my rightful place in her affections.

In what part of the world was the fellow? I had heard Pearl's aunt casually mention him, but I did not know where to find him. That night I said carelessly to Pearl, as I turned her music,—

"Where is your cousin, Jack Alstyne, stopping?"

"He is in Boston," was the reply, with averted head and flushed cheeks.

The next day I was in Boston. I found Alstyne easily, and followed him to the theatre. Never did a lover gaze on the charms of his mistress with more eagerness than I gazed at my rival, striving to read his very soul.

I saw a slender, stylish figure, elegantly dressed; a pale, oval face; full, firm lips,

half hidden by a heavy blonde mustache; darkish brown hair; steel-blue eyes, that could flash fire or melt into tenderness; a handsome, fascinating man, a dangerous rival, an unscrupulous enemy.

My heart sank within me. How could I hope to win a battle when I was as ignorant as a child of the weapons to be used? I uttered a fervent prayer for help as I resolved to do my best; for Pearl's future happiness, as well as my own, lay in the result.

On arriving at the hotel, I seated myself before the glass, and took a critical survey of myself. I shook my head sadly, for I saw none of the graceful ease and fascinating polish of Jack Alstyne in the reflection.

"Hollo, old fellow!" shouted a cheery voice, "have you fallen in love with your own image?"

"What good fortune sent you here, Alf?" I exclaimed, shaking his hand heartily; for Alfred Leighton was my old chum and confidant.

"Oh, I just ran into town for a day or two, and saw you as you entered the hotel. Well, my boy, how does it seem to be a Benedict?"

"I have n't been one long enough to find out," was my reply.

"You always were a lucky fellow, Theo; and, what is more to the point, you deserve your good fortune," earnestly.

"It's a mystery to me how a girl can fancy me, Alf," I burst out impatiently. "I'm not a bit of a lady's man; don't know anything about women, in fact: for I never had a sister, and can scarcely remember my mother. Now, there is Jack Alstyne"—

"Jack Alstyne!" interrupted Alf, repeating the name contemptuously. "Jack Alstyne, indeed! He's a fop and a flirt; fit for nothing on earth but to smirk and smile, and pull that long mustache of his. A woman would be a suitable candidate for a lunatic asylum to prefer that silly fellow to you."

"You are partial, my friend," I replied. "Alstyne is very fascinating, I have understood."

"To a certain class, yes. I tell you what it is, Theo, some women are—simpletons, to say the least; and they are ready to fall down and worship a fellow of his stamp: but to a woman with two grains of sense he

is just a butterfly, nothing more, take my word for it," cried Alf excitedly.

"Nevertheless, I would give a good deal for some of that graceful polish in ladies' society."

"Well, my boy," went on my friend, "after winning that lovely bride of yours away from a score of competitors, you are just as modest as ever. Here you are, rich, a patron of the fine arts, and goodness knows what else, your head crammed with learning, the strength of a Hercules, hosts of friends, and a charming wife, and you, you, Theo Cameron, are sighing for the froth and sparkle of a noted fop's graceful ease. Depend upon it, my dear boy, Jack Alstyne would give a goodly sum for your gifts of person, let alone your brains."

And Alf leaned back, with a look of "Answer that, if you can."

"You are a good fellow, Alf," I said warmly as I shook his hand. "My studies must have given me the blues, I think; for I feel lighter-hearted since hearing your friendly voice."

"That's it, Theo," hesitatingly: "you live rather too much alone. But that little wife of yours will soon regulate that, I dare say," playfully. "If she is as much to manage as my Amy is, you will have your hands full, if you are so much wiser than we common mortals. I have got her to name the month at last; but the little witch is such a tease, I am afraid she will make me wait six months longer."

And Alf gave a great sigh, and looked sober for two whole minutes.

"I hope you will be very, very happy, my dear friend," I said huskily. "Amy is a dear little girl, and you are the best fellow I know."

"Heaven knows I don't deserve such happiness, but I am trying to," he replied, blushing like a girl.

I never closed my eyes that night. During those long hours, I prayed for wisdom to guide me aright. I would forget myself, and live only for Pearl, I resolved. I would strive so hard for her love, that I must win it yet.

I would have given much to know how to meet my wife as the cars whirled me toward home next day. Should I caress her, as my heart prompted, or only give a quiet word of greeting? She passively endured my caresses, which were rare, but never returned them; so, after thinking a long time, I re-

solved to dispense with caresses, and greet her quietly.

"Was a bridegroom ever placed in my position before?" I wondered, as Pearl was evidently relieved that I handed her the presents I had brought her, instead of taking her in my arms as I longed to do.

I did not retire, after tea, to my study, but seated myself near Pearl, and talked of my journey. I had always been called a good conversationalist, and I did my best to interest my pale little wife.

She looked listless and tired when I began; but before long her sweet face brightened, and my heart gave a glad bound of delight as she became as gay and piquant as when I first knew her.

"Is it possible?" she exclaimed as the clock struck eleven. "I had no idea it was so late. I have spent a very pleasant evening, Theo," gently, laying her white hand on my shoulder.

"My darling!" I murmured passionately, pressing my lips to her hand.

Her face flushed as she turned hastily away.

The next week found us at Mrs. Alstyne's cottage by the sea. There was quite a large party assembled, Cousin Jack among the number.

Poor little Pearl grew quite white when they met; and I really longed to kick the fellow for the reproachful, injured look on his handsome face.

"You are not looking well, Jack," she said somewhat anxiously; for she little imagined late hours and dissipation caused his deathly pallor and the dark circles under his eyes.

"I am quite well now, thank you; but I have been awfully blue the past month," his eyes looking tenderly into hers. "I have tried everything to rid myself of the mischievous imps, without avail; and I fear they will never leave me, unless you, my dear little cousin, exorcise them as you used to do in those sweet, happy days when"—

Closing abruptly, he darted an evil glance at me, and hastily left the room, as if overcome with emotion.

Pearl's sensitive face was crimson as every eye was turned toward her, and her lips quivered slightly.

With a quick movement, I was by her, saying quietly, —

"Shall I bring your hat and shawl for a walk?"

"If you please," giving me a quick, grateful look.

She was silent and *distract* at first, but brightened a trifle after a while. Suddenly we met Jack and Belle Travers strolling down to the shore. His handsome head was bent, his eyes fixed adoringly on his companion's face, as her hand lay confidently in his.

A scornful smile curled Pearl's lips as she exclaimed abruptly, —

"I want to go home."

That evening, Pearl was radiant. She wore a robe of some cloud-like material, that made her look like an angel with her long, floating curls.

Jack did n't understand this new mood, it was plain; for he grew quite angry as she laughed gayly, replying saucily to his tender remarks.

"It nearly broke my heart when I knew you were married to that piece of marble," he said tenderly, as Pearl stood by the bay-window.

"How many times has your heart been broken the last half-dozen years, Jack?" carelessly.

Jack looked slightly confused.

"I have had my fancies, like every one else; but I never really loved any one but you, my dearest," his face aglow, and his eyes lit by luminous fires.

My heart stood still as I waited for Pearl's reply.

It came, clear and cold.

"You seem to forget that I am married, Mr. Alstyne, and that such language is an insult."

"You are afraid that your immaculate husband will be jealous of your humble servant, I presume?" he sneered, too angry to remember his good breeding.

"Not in the least, sir, I assure you," I coolly remarked, as I offered my arm to my wife.

Poor little Pearl gave me a frightened glance, and her slight form trembled violently as she walked away unsteadily by my side.

"Here is a giant running away with a fairy," I cried gayly to Mrs. Alstyne, who was on the veranda, as I gathered the slight form to my heart, and strode down the garden to a secluded arbor.

Two white arms stole round my neck, and my darling buried her face in my bosom, sobbing as if her little heart would break.

My heart ached as I gently smoothed her hair, and pressed warm kisses on her white hands, for I had resolved never to kiss her lips until I could claim her heart.

"You are very kind and patient, Theo," she said at last, as she raised her head; "and I am very grateful," with a little sob.

"It is not your gratitude, but your love, that I would die to gain," I cried, with my heart in my voice, and a great sob shaking my frame.

She did not shrink from me, as she usually had done; and her voice was very soft and tender as she said, after quite a long pause, —

"I wish we were at our own dear old home."

My heart gave a throb of exquisite joy as I involuntarily clasped her closer to my breast. Ah! how happy I was that night thinking we soon should be united in those close and holy ties God designed for all who marry!

But the next day my hopes were rudely dashed to the ground; for my darling shunned me, and Jack took every occasion to covertly insult me, and boldly played the distracted lover.

I quietly ignored the fellow's bitter sneers and insolence, — although my blood would sometimes boil, and my hands involuntarily clench themselves, — and devoted myself to my wife and Mrs. Alstyne's other guests.

I grew pale and thin with anxiety, and my friends became frightened at my changed appearance.

As for Pearl, she said not a word; but I often saw her covertly regarding me, and a number of times surprised her in tears.

Ever since the night she had wept on my breast, there had been an intangible reserve growing between us, — one so firm and strong that I was powerless to break it. I could not but admire her strategy in regard to Jack, though my heart throbbed with pain, for her quick wit and wisdom outwitted him at every turn; and from being willing to give her up so that he might make a wealthier marriage, now that she was lost to him, he became madly in love with her. And even I, her husband, could not blame

him, she was such a bewitching, tantalizing elf.

It was a fearfully hot day in August, — not a breath of air stirred, — as, scarcely able to move, I wandered to a little grove of trees close to the beach. A heavy gloom pervaded the company: for it had rained nearly a week; and Jack and his *fiancee*, Belle Travers, had quarreled, and broken their engagement ("for a married woman," her mother said spitefully); and Mrs. Alstyne had sprained her ankle.

It was my last day at the cottage; for the doctor had gravely advised mountain air.

"Your husband must stop thinking so much, Mrs. Cameron," he said decisively as he rose to leave. "Sing and read to him, take up his mind, and you may even pull his hair if he disobeys orders," he added, smiling.

"A woman's-rights man, as I live!" exclaimed Pearl, in mock horror, as he bowed himself out of the room.

"Is it anything serious, Dr. Grayson?" inquired Mrs. Alstyne, as he passed on to the veranda.

"If he does n't get help soon, madam, he will be a dead man in three months," was the startling reply.

Ah! how I longed to see my wife's face! But her back was toward me; and, without a word, she left the room, and I did not see her again for some hours.

I thought it all over as I lay there, and slow tears rolled down my cheeks. It was weak, perhaps; but I was thankful the end was so near, for I had no strength to keep up the agonized struggle longer.

"How long will it be after I am laid away to rest," thought I dreamily, "before Pearl's sweet face will be alight with joy as when I first knew her? Will she ever think of my love when too late, and forgive me the unconscious wrong I have done her?"

How changed she was! Great black rings gave her large eyes a pathetic, wistful look; her cheeks had lost their rose-pink bloom, and her form its roundness.

Suddenly voices roused me.

"How shameful it is for Mr. Alstyne to go on so after Mrs. Cameron!" said Miss Braxton indignantly.

"Mr. Cameron is a model husband, and never interferes with his bride's amusements," sneered Mrs. White. "She has

played her cards to some purpose, for all her innocent, baby face, and pussy-cat ways. I wonder handsome Jack does n't take it cooler; but being a man accounts for it."

"Take it cooler!" repeated the girl wonderingly. "I don't understand."

"Why, can't you see?" she said impatiently. "Mrs. Cameron has pulled the wool over her husband's eyes to make him make his will in her favor. When the tool dies, charming Jack will come in for money, widow, and all; but he is fearfully impatient, as all men are when their wishes are concerned."

"I am sure you must be mistaken, Mrs. White; for Mrs. Cameron can't seem to endure her cousin."

"All put on, my dear, all put on for our edification," laughing disagreeably. "Jack has been engaged a dozen times; but his dainty cousin will get the prize."

And she walked away coolly.

I heard a smothered sound, and, glancing through the leaves, saw Pearl with Jack beside her. With a quick movement, he was at her feet, her hands clasped tightly in his, crying passionately. —

"My darling! my beautiful darling! is it, can it be, true?" his kisses falling like rain on her hands, his eyes gleaming luminous fires. "O my beauty! I would give my soul to possess you. You are mine, mine. I claim you, soul and body."

Save for her flashing eyes, my wife might have been carved in stone.

"How dare you?" she cried haughtily. "It is true that I despise you for your baseness, your lies, and your treachery, Jack Alstyne. I never loved you; although I was so taken with your smooth, loving words, and tender looks, that I thought I was really in love. I hate myself for even thinking it."

"Pearl! Pearl! my little sweetheart!" he moaned, falling on his knees, "take back those cruel words, or they will break my heart."

"Your heart is adamant," scornfully. "Rise, and never let me see your face again."

Alstyne sprang to his feet with an oath, his eyes emitting baleful lights.

"I congratulate you on being so near a widow, my love," he sneered. "I suppose I must obey your prudish fears, and not mention love until the saintly Cameron,

whom you adore, is safe under the sod," insolently.

"You are right, Mr. Alstyne, — I do love my husband with my whole heart," she replied in a low tone, her face deadly pale.

"Satan and furies!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "His blood shall pay for this, my beauty; for I swear I will not be balked. I suppose you have done me the honor to listen to my conversation, Mr. Cameron," with elaborate politeness, as I appeared on the scene. "As you are obliged to leave the world so soon, I am happy to aid you," he sneered, deliberately raising his revolver.

There was a wild shriek, a flash and report, and all was dark about me.

The next I knew I was on the beach, and my wife's arms were about my neck, her warm kisses on my lips, and her dear voice murmuring in my ear, —

"I love you! I love you."

"Thank God!" I gasped fervently, and fell back in a faint.

I was dangerously ill after this with a fever and a broken arm, and Pearl nearly killed herself in caring for me.

Alstyne's excitement had prevented his taking correct aim; and the result was, only a broken arm and a bath in the sea.

Shrieking for help, Pearl sprang into the water after me, and succeeded in keeping my head above the water until aid arrived; so, after all, I owed my life to my darling's love and courage.

During my happy convalescence, Pearl shyly confessed that she began to love me before we left home, and, seeing the contrast between Jack's conduct and mine, soon gave me her whole heart in undivided love.

"And, O Theo, dearest!" she added softly, her eyes ashine, "you must get well: I cannot give you up."

Jack fled to Europe, staying several years. He married, at last, a stolid German, ugly, old, and very large, who was reported an heiress. When too late, he found that a small annuity was all she had. He is no longer the handsome and fascinating flirt, proud of his elegant figure and magnetic eyes. His eyes are bleared, and his fine features look coarse and sensual.

Although many years have passed since then, our love has known no cloud, and I reverently thank my heavenly Father daily for giving me my darling.

HOW MRS. MALCOLM FOUND HER BREAD.

BY FRANCES E. WADLEIGH.

"O dear!" sighed I for the twentieth time, at least, one fair May morning.

"What 's the matter now, sis?" asked my youngest sister, Katie. "Can't you make five dollars buy ten dollars' worth of dry goods?"

"That is just it! Here are five of us girls to be fitted out for the summer, and no money to purchase so much as a calico dress apiece! Well, we shall have to do without decent, not to say new and pretty, garments."

"It does seem too bad, that you and Helen, who work so hard, cannot have a part of what you earn."

I: was hard. Helen sewed industriously from morning until night for Madame Rive, the fashionable dressmaker; and I did my best to teach the youths of Union Hall: but our joint earnings, together with the small quantity of eggs and butter that mother could sell, were all consumed by the family necessities and by that dreadful mortgage. If father, an industrious carpenter, had had his health, we would not have been in this

strait: the mortgage grandpa had bequeathed us with the farm was almost all liquidated when father broke his leg, and consequently fell out of work. Troubles never come singly. Before father's leg was well, he insisted upon trying to use it, and injured it so badly that our physician feared he would be lame for life; while he was still confined to the house. Katie and Jennie were very ill with scarlet fever, our best cow died, and some one stole our only horse. We were in debt to the doctor, the last payment on that horrid mortgage was over-due, and the man who held this latter document had granted us three months' extension, but now he too was in pecuniary trouble, and needed the money: he had a fine offer for it, so he felt that he must foreclose.

And I was to have been married in August!

Lottie was too young to take my place in school, and the family needed my salary. Moreover, there was no money to buy a trousseau, not even a wedding dress. And every one in town knew that wealthy, pret-

ty, petted Susie Granger was in love with my betrothed, Robert Coleman, and was using every effort to rob me of him.

To be sure, Robert was truth itself, Susie's wiles had no apparent effect on him, and I had no cause to doubt his love and devotion; but I well knew that other men had been tempted away from those they loved when poverty compelled a long, almost hopeless, engagement.

For three weeks, if not more, Lottie had been trying to cheer us up by reminding us that "the darkest hour is just before the dawn."

"Never was dawn so long in breaking," I exclaimed this bright May morning, winking back the tears.

"Some one is at the door," cried Katie, who was washing up the breakfast dishes. "Shall I go?"

"No," replied I: "I will go."

Opening the front door, I saw on the steps a tall, heavily bearded, well-dressed young man,—a stranger.

"Mrs. Peter Malcolm lives here, I believe?" said he.

"Yes, sir. Will you come in?"

"Is she in here?" he asked, as I opened the parlor door.

"No," I answered, somewhat surprised; "but, if you will take a seat, I will call her."

"Is she in the kitchen? I will go to her, for I have been in the kitchen many a time," answered the man, refusing to enter the parlor.

I had read a great deal about tramps and well-dressed sneak-thieves, and I must candidly confess that I was frightened. Trying to disguise all appearance of alarm, I called aloud,—

"Mother!"

"Yes, my dear."

"Will you please come here?"

But, hearing my mother's voice, the stranger decidedly but very civilly exclaimed,—

"Ah! I hear her. I will go to her."

And, as he led the way to the kitchen, there was nothing left for me to do but to follow.

"Mrs. Malcolm, don't you know me?" he asked.

"No," she replied: "I cannot say that I do."

"Look closely at me," he added, "and think well."

Then, after a pause,—

"Don't you know me now?"

"No: I do not."

"I presume I have altered. At any rate, you remember poor August Muller, the immigrant who died here of ship-fever seventeen years ago? The poor, newly widowed fellow whose broken arm you tended so kindly, and whom you nursed so devotedly through his long illness? And his two children whom you took into your own house, and cared for as if they were your own?"

"Oh, yes! and you"—

"I," said my tramp, his blue eyes fairly shining, his deep voice trembling, "am the oldest of those poor orphaned children,—Fritz."

Then mother made him welcome. She asked him various questions about his past and his present, all of which he answered fully, adding,—

"I was only nine years old then, dear madam; but I well remember how your neighbors all said, 'Send Fritz and Louise to the orphan asylum,' and how you replied, 'No, I will take them home, and keep them until I can write to some of my Western friends who want to adopt some children.' And you did. You sent us, in the summer, to Mrs. Carpenter; and, thanks to you, my sister was their daughter, and I their son."

"How is Louise?"

"Very well. She will soon be married to a Mr. Reese, who is in the State Legislature, and is one of our leading citizens. Mr. Carpenter died ten years ago, but left a large fortune, and his wife brought us up. Some two weeks ago, the firm whose book-keeper I was took me into partnership; and now that I am a free man, by no means poor, I have come to hunt up my first benefactor, the dear woman whom my father blessed with his dying lips. We were sick, and you visited us; strangers, and you took us in. May God bless you! He will bless you."

This was the first we girls had ever heard of this, one of our mother's many charities. The tears—tears of joy, love, and sympathy—rolled down our faces while he described her kindness to him and his; and to his credit be it said that his own eyes were not dry.

Somehow he contrived to find out how close the wolf had come to our door, and in a twinkling our difficulties were removed.

le fairly compelled father to accept money from him, saying, —

“Call it a loan if you will not accept it as a gift or as payment of the great debt that Louise and I owe to your dear wife.”

And, lo! the dawn burst forth in sudden glory.

Father recovered his health in a few weeks, now the load of debt was removed from his mind, and soon was busy at remunerative work. The children did get some

summer clothing; and I — Well, I no longer fear Susie Granger's beauty nor her blandishments: my husband is too fond of me, and of his little namesake, our Robbie, our baby.

Fritz came to my wedding, and Louise sent me more than one handsome gift.

You may be very sure that none of Mrs. Peter Malcolm's daughters lack faith in the promise, “Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.”

HOW SHE WON HIM.

BY ADA F. STRICKLAND.

The Stanton family were assembled in their pleasant breakfast-room around a table spread with every luxury that could tempt a capricious appetite. Mr. Stanton, a rather stern-looking man of perhaps fifty years, read the morning paper while he waited for his chocolate, which his handsome, dignified wife dispensed from behind the silver urn.

It was a stringent rule in this otherwise rather free-and-easy family that all must assemble at their morning meal, it being the only one the father took with them; so that even the pretty elder daughter was here, in spite of the dark rings under the beautiful eyes that told of late hours the night before. So also was the young medical student and only son; and in her corner next her father was the baby and spoiled child,—the little fourteen-year-old girl who had been christened by the old-fashioned name of her grandmother, “Leah,” but which she her-

self had shortened with her baby tongue to “Lee.”

“Are you reading of the failure, sir?” inquired Arthur, who had just laid down his morning paper. “Quite surprising, is n’t it?”

“It is, indeed,” said Mr. Stanton. “I should have thought of any house in the city failing before Berwick & Son; but they have been going very fast lately.”

“Dear me, Mr. Stanton!” exclaimed his wife: “you don’t mean to say Berwicks have failed?”

This with an anxious look toward her daughter Laura, who now looked up with arched brows, and face a shade paler than its wont.

“Why, Arnold Berwick was considered one of our best young men.”

“Well, mamma,” said the clear, incisive voice of Mrs. Stanton’s youngest-born, which that lady dreaded to hear sometimes,

"does failing in business make him one of our worst young men?"

"Why, certainly not, dear," was the answer; "but of course it changes his position in society. You are not old enough to understand it, Lee."

Still that anxious look toward Laura, who gave no sign of the struggle going on in her proud heart. If she had ever loved anybody, it had been Arnold Berwick; and she knew she had given him reason to believe that she did. But she was old enough to know that this must all be forgotten now, — for a Stanton could not marry a poor man.

The struggle was not a very hard one, for Laura's nature was rather shallow, and she had been well trained. She was enabled very soon to lift her eyes to her mother's with a re-assuring smile, and to say lightly, —

"Too bad he failed just before the ball at the opera house: he is the best dancer in the city."

There was a clatter of dishes from Leah's corner, and the *enfant terrible* arose in her wrath.

"I am ashamed of you all!" she said vehemently. "When Mr. Berwick was a few dollars richer, he was 'one of our best young men.' Papa invited him here; mamma was pleasant to him; Laura danced with him, and let him make love to her; and Arthur rode and smoked with him. Now look at the difference! He is just as good as ever he was; and I'm going to treat him just as well. I never want to be a young lady if it makes me as cold-hearted as you are, Laura."

"Mamma," said the young lady addressed, "can't you teach that child a little reason?"

And she swept indignantly from the room.

"Where are you going to lecture next week, Miss Stanton?" inquired Arthur, with mock politeness.

"Leah, my child, you don't understand," began the mother; but was interrupted rather abruptly by this spoiled girl.

"Yes: I do understand, mamma. Because Mr. Berwick is poor now, he must not be invited here any more, and must not make love to Laura any more. I am glad I am a little girl. I intend to be just as kind to him as I can."

There were actually tears in the big child's blue eyes, and the little boot-heels were

set down emphatically as she left the room to get ready for school.

"It is a good thing for you, my dear," said her father, laughing, as he too arose, "that she is not a young lady. I fancy she will not be so easily managed as Laura. Do you suppose there is any danger at all in that quarter?"

"None whatever," said the mother: "Laura is too sensible, and too ambitious."

So the conversation ended.

Leah went down the broad steps, out on the pavement, her heart still swelling with indignation, longing in some way to show her friend Arnold that she would not change, if all the world did. At school she heard the story repeated, and all the changes rung upon it.

"That Arnold Berwick always held his head so high," said one girl who had always been Leah's pet detestation; "and now, just think, girls, he has taken a clerkship in Miller's new store."

"I suppose he will hold his head just as high above certain people as he ever did," said Lee sharply, and a little maliciously, — for the young lady's father was more than suspected of having gained his fortune by cheating the government. "This shows he's honest, at any rate, and is not going to cheat his creditors."

As she started home that evening, she hesitated, walked a few rods on the homeward way, then turned resolutely back.

"I want some new gloves," she said, looking down at her hands, where one rosy finger had worn its way through its kid covering; "and I'm going to Miller's after them."

So, a little later, Arnold Berwick was surprised to see a little figure in a navy-blue waterproof walk up to his counter, and extend a little hand in a worn glove.

"Good-evening, Mr. Berwick. I" — and then the clear voice faltered, and "I'm sorry for you," finished the trembling red lips.

That was not at all what Leah intended to say; but it was now too late to recall it, and she looked up bravely into the brown eyes above her.

Arnold had not given way before to his feelings over the catastrophe that had so sadly changed his fortune; but the firm lips trembled now under the dark mustache as he gave the little hand a warm pressure, — wondering, as he did so, if the elder sister would give him as cordial a greeting.

"You are very kind, Miss Lee," he said. "I have felt as though I had not many friends left; but I see there is hope for me yet. Can I do anything for you today?"

"Yes: a pair of gloves."

He could not help thinking this only an excuse; but he found the number wanted, and watched her fit them on. Then there was a little more conversation, about the weather, and so forth, and Arnold Berwick thought, as he opened the door for the slight, graceful figure's exit, —

"Strange I never noticed before what wonderfully tender eyes that child has!"

That evening Arnold Berwick's card was sent up to Laura Stanton, and returned with the chilling indorsement "Not at home," although the gentleman could have sworn he saw the fair face at the window as he ascended the steps.

"So that dream is over," he thought, as he retraced his steps. "There is no truth or honor in womanhood."

Then he thought of a pair of tender blue eyes, with a suspicion of tears in their depths, and the words "I'm so sorry for you," rang in his ears until he recalled the last bitter thought.

Almost every day he met Leah, and always there passed between them the same cordial greeting; for now they felt like old friends, and Arnold came to watch for the little figure, and to be very lonely and absent-minded when it did not come.

"It is wrong for me to go to Miller's so much," thought Leah; "but then I do want something almost every day, and it seems to cheer Mr. Berwick when I come."

But one day, as she came out of the store, she came face to face with Arthur, who looked at her with a mischievous laugh, — looked at her from her brown head, with its wide school-hat, down to the small boot showing so plainly under the short dress.

"Dear, dear!" he said; "my little sister has made a very early start in life! Is it the new goods, or the new clerk, that attracts you to Miller's so frequently, Miss Stanton?"

Leah's face flushed hotly; but she deigned him no answer, quickening her steps to get out of his way. But he overtook her, and drew her arm in his.

"Not so fast, little sis," he said: "it is time your brother was taking care of you. I had no idea you had become a young lady so soon."

In a very unladylike manner the girl jerked her hand away from its clasp, and faced him.

"Arthur Stanton," she said, "I shall not go one step farther until you leave me."

Knowing her of old, he knew she meant what she said; and so, lifting his hat politely, he sauntered on, while she went in an entirely different direction. But she knew this was not the end of it, and was not surprised when it was announced in the family conclave next morning that she was to start the week following to a famous boarding-school in one of the Eastern States. There was no reason assigned, and not another word said to Leah about her visits to Miller's, — in which the father knew the child was innocent; but, nevertheless, it was better she should go.

In the days that intervened, she was kept so busy trying on articles in her outfit for school there was not a chance for a good-by at Miller's store; but on the morning of her departure a bouquet was handed to Mr. Berwick, with a little card down deep among the pansies and rosebuds that simply said, —

"I am going away to school. Good-by. and do not forget your little friend,

"LEE."

Forget her? He knew now, with a strange thrill of pain, that he never should forget the sweet, trusting child on this side of the grave; for he knew that he loved her.

Five years have passed since we found the Stanton family around the breakfast-table, and now we find them there again. The two elders are perceptibly older: the marks of care upon their still handsome faces have grown deeper as the years passed. Arthur has long ago flown from the parent-nest, and, with his bride, has taken up his abode in a distant city, there practicing his profession. Laura, a little faded and worn at twenty-three, still keeps her place at the home-table, rather overshadowed just now in the radiant presence of her younger sister, who, with her well-earned diploma, has left the seminary forever.

Leah is beautiful, and with the beauty that does not fade, — a beauty of soul and heart that shines through the clear, blue eyes, and trembles in smiles about the earnest, tender lips. The parents are evidently

very proud of her,—the father thinking what an ornament to his stately home she will be; the mother planning how soon she will gain another and statelier home; Laura thinks, with a little thrill of envy, how the fresh beauty of her sister will win her crown of belleship from her; while Lee herself only thinks how glad she is to be at home after all these years,—for, on one pretext or another, they have kept her away, during all the vacations, at the seaside or in the mountains,—and wondering perhaps what has become of the handsome clerk at Miller's. Laura breaks the silence.

"You have not told Lee the news, mamma: it will certainly interest her."

"What about, Laura? Oh, yes: Mr. Berwick."

She pretends not to see the rich wave of color that sweeps into Leah's cheek, but goes on rapidly.—

"I dare say some one has written it to her. Your old friend has come into a fortune, Leah, and has bought out Miller & Brother."

"So he is again one of our 'best young men,' is he, mamma?" asks Leah sarcastically.

It is the elder lady's turn now to blush.

"You will find that money does make a difference in society, my daughter," is all she says.

All that day Leah is dreaming,—now resolved, like the impetuous child she used to be, to rush down to Miller's store, and tell Mr. Berwick she is "so glad," as she once told him she was "so sorry;" then, again, determined to treat him rather coldly if she should meet him,—for if he were really the true, earnest friend he once professed to be he would have found some means of communicating with her during these years of school-life.

She does not know the stern sense of honor that has bound Arnold Berwick's heart, and kept him silent until the girl he loved was no longer a child, and he could offer her a station in life worthy her acceptance. She does know a little later that day, however, when a card with "Arnold Berwick" inscribed thereupon is brought to her room, and she goes with swift, undignified steps to the parlor to meet him.

And he? One look at her face is enough, and he knows there is not need of many words between them.

Mr. Stanton is rather surprised next day by a visit from Mr. Berwick, who asks him to give up his dearest treasure. Of course no objection is made now, and all the world knows they are soon to be married; but only a very few know just "how she won him."

HOW THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE WAS MADE TO RUN SMOOTH.

BY ESTHER SERLE KENNETH.

CHAPTER I.

Once a little red house stood on a hill; and a family, consisting of a man, and his wife, daughter and son, lived in that house. The man's name was Alexander Kent: his wife's name was Jeanie Kent. The name of his daughter was Marjory, and the little boy's name was Willie. Alexander Kent was of Scotch descent, and his wife was a bonny Scotch body; but, while the boy had the Caledonian hair and eyes, Marjory Kent had a face singular and untraceable in origin as it was beautiful. A face like that of Miss Prescott's "Marion," broad, with long black brows, and almond-shaped eyes beneath, a straight nose, a full, arched, coral-red mouth, a smooth cheek, tinted like a peach, silky, billowy hair, a low forehead, and large, white lids. This was Marjory Kent's face, derived from—where?

The Kents were poor people, very poor. The little red house was on a New-Hampshire hill, and what the Kents called their farm was little more than a lot of stony, New-Hampshire ground. Then Mr. Kent was lame, which made "times" always "hard" with them; so, to eke out their scanty income, Marjory had taught school ever since she was fifteen years old.

A life of stern reality had made the girl grave before her time. From her earliest childhood she had witnessed and felt trials of poverty and sacrifices of duty. She never became indifferent to them,—never in the slightest degree. That which tortured and galled her childhood, tortured and galled her when she was eighteen years old.

She seemed older than that. Her manner and the expression of her face belonged to mature years. There was something in her manner which betrayed responsibility, and something in her eyes which betokened comprehensiveness and judgment. And with the dignity was mingled a sadness.

She was no heroine to those among whom she lived. She was known to people in general as "Kent's girl," and Kent—old, pinched, lame, and scant in dress—hardly more the hero & credit. Many, knowing

her first by report, and finally meeting her, were surprised. The girl took no notice. She was almost a stoic: people's indifference, contempt, or admiration, were alike indifferent to her.

She and the angels only knew through what suffering and resolution she had arrived at this pass. There was that in the deep, soft eyes, the full lip, and changing color, which betokened something very different.

Marjory had been denied her childhood; and thence issued much of her life's wrong. All her life through she missed her childish innocence and her childhood's development. This was the reason why her moods were so contradictory; why she would bend submissively under the control of certain persons, and defy with her cool eyes and arched neck the command of another; why she would smile lovingly at a caress one hour, and stand haughtily aloof from those who loved her the next. There was but one to whom she was always confiding and tender. Her little brother Willie came, fresh and sweet, into her life just when she fully realized how hard and bitter it was. She took the guileless child in her arms and into the depths of her heart. He knew her; he loved her; he was her salvation.

The Kents had lived in that house for twelve years; ever since Marjory was a little girl, and before Willie was born. About that time a gentleman came down from the city, and inquired of Alexander Kent if he would not sell his little place. A gentleman from New York was about to buy the Wilian estate above, and wanted the few acres at the foot of the hill included. But those few acres were unattainable. Alexander Kent would not sell them; proving that there is always something which the wealthiest man cannot get. The poor man chose to keep the little place upon which he felt himself settled for life, and Mr. Raymond, agent, returned with the news which disappointed and put out of humor the wealthiest man in New York.

"To have that little, red, ten-foot abom-
ination in full view of my window and door

spicuous from every part of the grounds!" exclaimed Mr. Malvern. "It's unbearable, Raymond!"

"I offered the man every inducement, sir," replied Raymond. "But 'every man's a king; his home's his palace,' you know. He chose to keep it, and I'd advise you to make the best of the matter. It is n't so very bad. A line of poplars run up on the edge of the lawn will conceal it entirely from the front of the house."

Finally Mr. Malvern entered into devising ways and means for shutting out from his world at Harford the little red house of Alexander Kent.

Meanwhile Alexander Kent was talking over the matter with his family.

"He offered you a very good price for it, Alec," said the wife. "It might have been better for you to have sold it. Yet Willie was born here," she added, looking around upon the familiar aspect of the homely place.

"Yes, Jeanie, it's our home. We'll bide our lives here," replied Alexander Kent, firmly and decisively, as he smoked.

Marjory had said nothing. She stood by one of the small-paned windows, looking silently out upon the gray fields; for it was early April weather, and the sods were not yet green. A bare lilac-bush kept scratching and squeaking against the glass; a flock of early birds were circling about the barn in the sunshine; and across the road the old red cow stood gazing meditatively over the fence of the cow-yard. A crow flapped slowly across the lately plowed corn-field, and sailed away in the clear air beyond the pine woods. Another followed with a grave 'caw, caw, caw.' And in the door-yard the hens were scratching and clucking with a bustle of importance, and an atmosphere of family council for the time in hand, and the time ahead, when the family would be larger, and there would be more care and trouble for the senior members.

Marjory looked at all with slow glances, glances which told that she was looking at things too familiar to be thought about. She was pale and grave. The talk of selling the old house, and removing to another, had startled her a little. She did not cast her vote either way. The place was familiar and dear to her,—part of herself; yet its possession made part of the pain in her heart,—the old, dumb pain, which did not trouble her often, because she was used to

it. The house was poverty-stricken and bare and lonely. She could not tolerate it, only that it was her home; and because it was her home it would cost her much to leave it. The girl had strong adhesiveness.

Yet her life was stirred by the thought, and her soul sent up a strong protest against her fate. Her homely, irksome, treadmill round of daily living bore upon her youth, and blighted its fruits. But it was settled that the little red house was not to be sold, so Marjory remained in the place. She remained there, I say; and in all the strife and action and enterprise of this world no one can prove that a voluntary change is ever ultimately for the best. Years afterward Marjory wondered what her fate would have been if she had not staid there.

The William estate became the Malvern estate. The old house was pulled down, and another constructed; the lawns were stocked with foreign shrubbery, gleaming statues, shade-trees, and summer-houses. There was a fine stable with a cupola and gilded weather-vane built, and there was an avenue made down to the pond, where a gay little boat was moored.

All this took a year. Finally, when the place was completed, and the detested little red house shut out from Mr. Malvern's aristocratic eyes, the gentleman came thither with his family.

It was May weather. The glittering curricule ground slowly up the hill, past the little red house, while the great, stately white building gleamed down upon its occupants. There were but three,—Mr. Malvern, his son, and his little daughter. The child was dressed in black; father and son wore crape upon their hats. Little Siren was motherless. During the past month Mr. Malvern had lost his wife, and there was no mistress to come to Poplar Hill, as they had named the place.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon. School was out, and Marjory was going slowly home. She passed the carriage, taking in its inmates at one quiet glance, but not looking back once after she stood in the door-yard, and the curricule still ground over the gravel of the winding carriage-road upon the hillside. She was quite too haughty, remembering Mr. Malvern's desire to thrust her father's little place out of his sight. The Malverns! she thought that she despised them all,—people haughty, selfish, sensual, whose pride was vanity, and whose

gentleness good manners. She hated such people from her soul.

She went into the house, and stooped down to kiss her little brother, who was playing with the kitten, and gave a keen, comprehensive glance about her as she hung her bonnet and sack upon their nail.

The room was small,—the kitchen and dining-room of the house. Her father, dingy, downcast, stolid in aspect, sat smoking by the fireplace, where her mother also crouched, frying potatoes for supper. Both had the unmistakable air of poverty. It was not their dress, their position, their occupation, nor their surroundings. It was the expression of hard endurance which furrows certain lines in the face. Not the martyr's lofty guise, but the look which time brings upon the face of the illiterate poor man who has struggled a lifetime for his daily bread, and been buffeted, disdained, and thwarted, until all that is free and light in him is ground down into subjection to his poverty.

Marjory felt this, and something in her turned distressfully to the three faces in the carriage,—all lofty, fine, and free in bearing. That look she felt to be the right one for men and women to wear. In the case of the Malverns it might be a false symbol; but she yearned for the right to it for her and hers. This was the secret feeling in her heart as she turned to Willie again, kneeling down before him, and putting her head on his little lap.

"There's a little girl gone up on the hill to live, sis," he said, tumbling her silky hair with his hands. "Now I'll have somebody to play with, won't I?"

"No," Marjory answered.

"Why?" asked Willie, wondering.

"Because she's rich, and you are poor!"

Marjory spoke with swift bitterness; then a hot flush stole over her face. She had no right to put such ideas into the child's head, so she sought to palliate her reply.

"Her folks are wealthy, Willie; so she will probably have a teacher at home, and won't come to school: so you won't be likely to see her."

"Oh, I'll go up there," answered the boy innocently. "Does your head ache, sis?"

"Yes: smooth my forehead, Willie."

"Supper is ready, Marjie," said the mother. "Go bathe your head, and have your tea,—that'll cure you. I want you to sew for your father tonight."

"Yes," said Marjory, springing up, and forgetting to tell Willie never to go up on the hill, and on no account ever to put himself in the way of the Malverns.

CHAPTER II.

The housekeeper and servants were already settled at Poplar Hill when the family came. The house was thoroughly arranged, and immediately the family were settled.

A few days later, John Malvern sat alone in his study, engaged in translating a fable of Lessing's. It was a fine, clear-cut face that bent over the paper-strewn table. Lofty, sweet, serene, with a golden-red beard shading the lower half of the profile as the grand head was bent over his work. Looking up once, and resting his chin on his hand in momentary meditation, he revealed a pair of deep-blue eyes and a broad forehead under the shade of the fair, clustering hair.

The ringing shouts of his merry little sister who was at play in the garden disturbed him. He looked at her from the window once; but he had not the heart to check her play with the pet doe with which she was frolicking, and he again bent over his papers.

The study was his own. It was a medium-sized, octagon room, exquisitely furnished, and green as a sea-cave in color. The floor resembled a spring meadow full of white bloom; the lounges and library chairs were covered with velvet tapestry, tinted, like the satin window-drapery, of a deep, rich green. The library shelves of black walnut occupied one side of the room: the three other sides were hung with superb paintings, one a superior work by a young artist, the others valuable old originals. Upon a pedestal in the southwest corner was a bust of Goethe; opposite, one of Prescott; and upon a bracket at John Malvern's right hand stood a stately marble Minerva.

There was something fascinating in the position of this noble-looking young man at work under the apparent supervision of the beautiful goddess of wisdom. It would take but little imagination to consider him akin to the lovely marble deity. There seemed just the right degree of warmth and delicate coloring in him to melt and charm into humanity and human love the spirited form above him. One could see just how

the snowy arms would drop down in a wreathing embrace, how lovely the goddess Minerva would be as the woman Minerva, with a man of such godlike aspect to love; for in her lover's face would be all the intellectual grandeur of her own.

But there was no sign of the goddess Minerva doing anything but standing quiet in her high serenity; and John Malvern wrote on, with no probable thoughts of her doing anything else, or of her at all. He had just attained the nice, finishing point of his work, when the study door opened, and a fresh, sturdy young voice called out, —

"Is the little girl in here?"

John Malvern looked up in astonishment.

There, thrust in at the door, in company with a little brown fist upon the door-knob, was a ruddy face, with a pair of wide-awake blue eyes in it, and a quantity of flaxen curls around it.

"What will you have, sir?" asked John Malvern, attentively regarding this mysteriously tangible intruder upon his attention.

The blue eyes leisurely took in the superb apartment, and the elegant young man sitting at the table, with his handsome, surprised face turned upon his visitor.

The two pairs of blue eyes looked fairly at each other.

"What do you want, my man?" repeated John Malvern, smiling.

"I came up to see the little girl," replied Willie Kent.

"Where did you come from?"

"Home."

"Where is that?"

"Down to the foot of the hill."

"Ah!"

"Where is she?" asked Master Willie, intent upon his errand. He was destined to be a bold lover.

"Siren is in the garden, I presume."

"Where is that?"

"Down the stairs, and out through the glass door."

Willie's face disappeared promptly: slam went the door.

Mr. John Malvern was left again to his reflections. But they were broken up, as well as the absent, intent depths of his eyes. He laid down his pen, rose, and leaned out at the window. Little Siren stood under a tree, swinging her hat by its strings, and Willie was making his way toward her across the lawn. John Malvern watched the meeting of the children curiously.

Little Willie Kent, clad in linsey-woolsey, with his old straw hat crushed down over his curls, and his sturdy little feet encased in copper-toed shoes, marched straight up to the fairy heiress of Poplar Hall, and came to a halt, with his hands behind him.

"I've come to play with you," he said.

Little Siren's innocent eyes regarded her new acquaintance gravely. She was only five years old, and looked like a garden lily.

"What can you play?" she questioned softly.

"Oh," said Willie, "I can play go to market, and build a barn, and sell the old cow."

Little Siren looked puzzled.

"I don't know how to play that," said she. "Can you play at grace-hoops?"

"No," said Willie, puzzled in his turn.

"Well, can you play 'Round the rosy, rosy ring'?"

Willie shook his head. The would-be playmates seemed to be in difficulty. John Malvern could not restrain a gleeful laugh. The children looked up.

"O John!" said Siren, running toward the window, and lifting her beautiful little face toward her brother, "here 's a little boy come to play with me, and we don't know what to play."

"Go up on the knoll, and swing," said John.

The suggestion was favorably received. The children went away together, and the young gentleman returned to the table.

"Oh, the grand democracy of childhood," he murmured, with a pleasant smile, as he seated himself.

He worked for an hour, or two hours, perhaps. All that time he had heard the occasional voices of the children upon the knoll; but as he rose at last from the table he remembered that he had not heard a sound from them for the last few moments, and he put on his hat, and went out for a walk, and to find them.

It was June weather. As he crossed the knoll, under the blue sky and waving trees, the honeyed scent of the snowy agalias of the woods drifted on the breezes into his face. It was nearly ten o'clock, yet the dew was still on the shrubs. The knoll was covered with a kind of grass which starred the ground with blue blossoms, bright and fairy-like, and the glossy yellow buttercups glowed clearly, here and there, in the sunshine. And there were clumps of wild

roses under the trees. Never was a prettier walk than that over the knoll. The children were not there. He walked on toward the pond, thinking he heard their voices in that direction. As he came in sight of the pond, a slight figure—proud, yet girlish, and clad in gray—passed in at the south gate of the garden, and advanced toward the pond, evidently so intent on observing the children, who were indeed there, that she did not see him at all.

The boat was moored near a steep bank, and in the deepest water of the pond. Into the boat the children had by some means climbed, and pulled themselves off, with sticks, from the shore as far as the boat's chain would allow.

John Malvern paused, and the figure of the girl first reached the bank.

"Willie! Willie!" she called, in a clear, youthful, authoritative voice.

The boy sprang to his feet, and stepped upon the side of the boat to leap upon the bank. Of course the boat lurched with his weight: he lost his balance, and fell head-foremost into the water.

The girl gave a single cry, and sprang down the bank; but some one else was there in an instant.

"Wait! wait! don't be frightened," said John Malvern.

He flung off his sack and hat, and plunged into the water, which was some six feet deep. In an instant he was back upon the bank with the child in his arms.

Willie was insensible. Marjory gave one look at him, then raised her terrified eyes to Malvern's face. It was undisturbed. He glanced first at his own home, then at the little red house at the foot of the hill. The latter was nearest.

"Siren," he said, "sit still in the boat until I come back. Remember. Young lady, I will take the child to his home: it is nearest. Is he your brother?"

The calm, firm, courtly tones re-assured Marjory, in her trembling agitation.

"Yes," she said chokingly.

They were walking rapidly down the hill. John Malvern looked at her earnestly, — secretly astonished by her face, — and openly re-assured her.

"Your brother is in no danger, — only made insensible by the shock and the fright. He was not in the water long enough to do him any serious injury," he said kindly.

Marjory bent her head, a little color com-

ing back to her cheeks. They reached the door-yard. Willie was still insensible.

"Go and tell your mother, that she may not be alarmed," said John Malvern; and, obediently as a child, Marjory opened the door, and went in, saying, —

"Willie has fallen into the water, and Mr. Malvern has brought him home, mother; but he says he is in no danger, so don't be frightened."

Marjory had unconsciously recognized John Malvern, brief as was her glance at him as he rolled past her on the day of his arrival.

As the mother — with the mother's alarm in her face, in spite of all assurances — sprang forward, John Malvern put her gently aside, and laid the child upon a settee, saying, —

"Heat a blanket; and don't be alarmed, — I assure you there is no danger."

And, in confirmation of his words, Willie opened his eyes. In a few moments the child was stripped, and placed in a warm bed; and, seeing him doing well, John Malvern escaped all thanks by quietly retiring at a moment when mother and sister were engrossed with their charge.

CHAPTER III.

There had been a week of vacation, and the next morning school commenced again. As Marjory opened the door of her home to go to school she came face to face with John Malvern.

"Good-morning, Miss Kent. How is the little boy?" he said.

"Quite well. Mr. Malvern, we thank you for your generous help, and" —

"Not at all," he interrupted, bowing. "I intended to go in this morning, and see the little fellow; but it is very early for a call, and if you will allow me" —

He took her satchel of books, and turned to walk with her to the school-house, which was on the other side of the road, half-way between her home and his own.

A soft, rich tinge of exquisite pleasure came into Marjory's cheek as they walked. A whole world was opened to her in that idle, brilliant chat. His words opened a new avenue from every topic they touched upon. From the weather he went to a certain golden day spent in Italy; from the prospect before them to paintings; from the studies of Marjory's pupils to books; then

to men and things. Finally they stopped at the school-house door, both happily animated.

"Miss Kent, how do these little folks win themselves to favor?" asked Malvern, looking at a group of Marjory's pupils who were approaching.

"They bring me fruit and flowers and kisses, and promises to be good," she answered, smiling.

"And will you allow me to bring you fruit and flowers and"—

She stopped him.

"You are not one of my pupils, and I cannot promise to take your favors on the terms they have."

"Ah, well; but I may send them?"

"What?"

"A basket of peaches, damsons, pears, and strawberries, roses, lillies, pansies, and agalias."

"The terms?"

"That you shall admire their artistic arrangement, first; second, that you shall admire me, who arranged them; third, that you shall allow me to admire you."

She shook her head, laughing, blushing, and gradually retreating.

"Don't send them, please," she said.

"Ah! but I must, if you will allow me. Receive them on your own terms, then; only"—

There was a world of merry meaning in his eyes as he bowed and departed; and Marjory turned and entered the school-room, her blood thrilling, her heart beating, her lips and eyes and cheeks glowing as if she were but just now alive.

But the pleasant excitement died into a bitterness. She came to be angry with herself, remembering who John Malvern was; angry that his careless gallantry should afford her so much happiness. A sullen resolution settled in her.

"He shall not play with me," she said.

As if anticipating this, the basket of fruit came with this most delicately worded message: "For Willie and his sister." What could Marjory do but send thanks, and exclaim with admiration when the cover was lifted, and the picture of the blue and gold and crimson fruit, lying in a bed of snow-white, rosy, and royal-purple blossoms, glowed upon her sight? She hated to disturb them, and was chary of feeding Willie with the great, blue plums, or tasting the luscious peaches. As she bent over them,

taking in their scent and beauty like a soul, her mother said,—

"Really, now, it was kind of the young gentleman to think of us, was n't it, daughter?"

"Yes, very," Marjory answered, raising herself suddenly, and smiling over the flowers no more.

Willie was finally allowed to demolish the picturesque arrangement, and eat the luscious fruit.

Two days later, on returning from school, Marjory found a package awaiting her. She opened it. It contained a handsomely bound copy of a new poem, with these words lightly traced on the fly leaf:—

"Please read: I would like your opinion."

It was a subtle compliment to Marjory, who, starved for books, had always dwelt utterly alone in her love of literature. That a man like John Malvern could be interested in her thoughts was flattering.

It was hardly possible for her to resist reading the poem; and in the dewy mornings, and golden noons, and still, dreamy, singing evenings, Marjory bent over the book, drinking in its sweetness, and tender passion, and truth, until her heart swelled to ecstasy, and her eyes grew deep with thought.

And so, connecting himself with the highest and sweetest that came to her life, John Malvern won for himself the place in her thoughts which he wished to gain. Day after day, books, magazines, flowers, and pleasant, friendly messages came; and day by day they met for a moment,—Marjory more happy than she quite knew, but half warned by her intuitive inclination to entrench herself in her native reserve. Of these moods John Malvern took no notice, except to be gently respectful, and so winningly grave and tender that Marjory would melt to the most submissive gentleness under his eyes. I do not mean that he made love to her after the recognized manner. He only bent deferentially under her prideful answers, took no notice of the tell-tale color upon her cheek, but went on with his conversation, his friendly attentions, and his masterly manner of receiving everything, until Marjory would call herself a fool, and resolve not to borrow trouble, since there was no reason for it. It was only when there came no book or bouquet or toy for Willie—for John Malvern was

Willie's prime favorite—that a secret pain in Marjory's heart startled her into the thought, "What will be the end?"

Very soon matters came to a crisis. One evening the harvest moonlight tempted Marjory out of the house into the fields. There was no dew, and the breezes blew the clover into tossing billows. Far away the town gleamed white and still, and the moon drifted slowly, slowly through the high, clear sky.

Marjory stood by the stone-wall which separated the corn-field of her father from the clover-mowing lot of a neighbor. She was at some distance from the hill, and out of view of the great white house.

Suddenly the noise of wheels fell upon her ear, and she saw a carriage coming slowly up the road. She was bareheaded, and her hair blown loosely about her face, so she stepped over the bars lying on the ground, and stood hidden among the tall corn. She heard the wheels coming steadily on. When the carriage came opposite the bars she could see it plainly, and in an instant her cheek was white as death. It was the Malvern curricie, and in it sat John Malvern and a beautiful young lady. She had a lovely blonde face, which was turned up to her companion's gaze, and her slight form rested against his encircling arm. They were talking softly,—it seemed to Marjory fondly. She turned faint and sick as the carriage rolled slowly by. Then she covered her face, and stood silent and still for one little moment, in which she lived enough to have vitalized a year.

She lingered a time, then turned to go home. It seemed hours since she came there. The fields, the clover scent, the moonlighted sky—all were hateful to her. She looked desperately toward the blue hills. She wanted to get away—away. She crept up to her room, locked herself in, and lay awake upon her bed all night.

CHAPTER IV.

Three days later John Malvern was reading quietly in his study, when a servant entered, and laid a package on the table.

"Where is that from, Thomas?"

"Little Willie Kent brought it, sir, with word that his sister sent her thanks," said the servant.

Malvern tore the wrapper off. It was Tennyson's "Idyls," which he had sent

Marjory only three days before. She did not usually return a book so soon.

But he suspected nothing. He sat there, turning the pages idly, and thinking. By and by he fell to writing on the paper cover, scribbling over and over again, in a dozen styles of penmanship, the name "Marjory." And all the time his lips wore a dreamy smile, sweet as the marble Minerva could have worn, I think, had she melted into beautiful flesh and blood.

Suddenly the door opened, and Mr. Malvern entered.

"John," said he, "what is this I hear of your attention to that girl at the foot of the hill?"

"Are you speaking of Miss Kent, father?"

"I believe her name is Kent. I have noticed that she is very pretty, and I hear a great deal lately of your going there, and sending her books and flowers. What does it mean? I know you too well to suppose that you can have any dishonorable intentions."

"Certainly my intentions are honorable, father."

"John, it is n't possible that you can have any thoughts of marrying that girl!"

"Those are my thoughts and plans, father."

Mr. Malvern stood the picture of astonishment.

"John, she is"—

"My dear father," said the young man, rising, and speaking firmly but respectfully, "I think that I know what she is better than you do; for I have had a better opportunity of judging. I respect, admire, and love her; and I intend to make her my wife. My brother Grant married to please you, and is made unhappy for life. I resolved long ago to make an unbiassed choice. Surely, my dear father, you have given me your full trust and confidence too long to believe I am not capable of managing this matter wisely for myself."

All that was strong and noble shone in John Malvern's eyes as he fixed them upon his father's face. Their clear gaze pierced the crust of conventional pride and selfishness which covered Mr. Malvern's heart. He hesitated for a moment, opened his lips to speak, then finally turned, and left the room in silence. He was not convinced, perhaps, but he was overpowered by his son's determination, which he knew by ex-

perience to be steadfast as the rocks themselves.

After his father had gone, John walked the floor, a little agitated. It had cost him something to put into words his sacred regard for Marjory Kent, to vanquish his father with a manner of assurance which was not thorough, since he was not sure that Marjory would marry him. At times he believed she loved him; but he had waited, perhaps a little selfishly, for her to betray her heart before he allowed the tide of his heart to flood his life. He felt her pride to be beyond that of any one he had ever known; and his admiration filled him with love and fear. He almost believed that there was not another girl in the world who would not regard him as an eligible match on account of his wealth. Marjory, he knew, would never marry him for his wealth, and he very much doubted that she would marry him for any other quality which he possessed.

Suddenly a sweetly pretty face looked into the room.

"John, why are you shut up here all this lovely morning?"

"Oh, I have been studying, pussy. Come in."

"No: Siren wants me."

And the pretty face disappeared, and the door closed.

Siren and Willie had come to be daily playmates. John Malvern could hear their shouts in the garden. Marjory had contented herself with strictly forbidding Willie to enter the house of Poplar Hall, and the boy was very well content to play with little Siren about the grounds.

John listened to the happy voices of the children for a while, and then went down and joined them. They were hunting acorns under the oaks.

"How is your sister today, Willie?" he asked.

"I don't think she's well," said Willie gravely, breaking an acorn from a twig.

"Why, she is n't ill, is she?"

"Well, she's real pale this morning, and she speaks as if she was tired. She says she is n't tired, so I guess she's sick."

On the strength of Willie's conclusions, Malvern turned to go down the hill.

"She's going to New York next week," said Willie.

"What?" exclaimed Malvern, facing about instantly.

"Marjie's going to New York."

"Why is she going there, Willie?"

"You know Minnie Branou's mother, Mr. Malvern?"

"I know whom you mean, — yes."

"Well, she's going to New York next week, and she says that if Marjie'll go and be her government" —

"Her what?"

"Her gov-er-ment for Minnie and Annie" —

"Her governess, Willie. Yes: go on."

"Well, Marjie's going."

John Malvern's blue eyes were as black as coals. Here was an unlooked-for turn of affairs.

He went slowly down the hill, his thoughts very busy. If Marjory cared for him would she go off in this way? Looking a little pale and troubled, and really very anxious, he knocked at the door of the little red house.

Mrs. Kent opened the door.

"May I see Miss Marjory?" he asked.

"She is n't in, sir. She's in the town, a-shopping."

"I am very sorry: I wish to see her very much."

"She's going to New York, sir. Miss Marchand has the school. Our Marjie is possessed to go away from home. Oh, dear, sir, I don't know why! It's been ever a good home to her, — my girl. All the girl I've got, Mr. Malvern. I feel it sorely."

The good woman little guessed that the handsome young gentleman felt it sorely also.

"Mrs. Kent, I will call this evening, if you please. Be kind enough to tell Marjory that I would like to see her."

"I will, sir."

As the young man went up the hill, and Mrs. Kent stood looking after him, there slowly dawned upon the good woman's mind a thought that John Malvern might have something to do with the late change in Marjory. When Marjory returned, she watched her face anxiously as she gave her the message. But the girl's face expressed nothing but weariness and apathy. She made no sign of emotion, and the mother turned away, muttering, —

"Then what is in the girl's mind? Something has come over her, to be willing to leave her home."

After supper, Willie came and put his arms about his sister's neck, kissing her,

out of the fresh tenderness of his loving little heart. She held him close.

"Darling, what will sister do without you?" she murmured.

"Marjie, Mr. Malvern" —

"Hush, Willie."

"Don't you like him?"

"Not to talk about now," she whispered.

"Well, then, there 's a real pretty lady up there" —

"O Willie! don't."

There came a knock at the door.

"Go, Marjory," said Mrs. Kent. "It's Mr. Malvern."

Marjory faltered a moment, then went forward steadily, and opened the door. There stood John Malvern.

"Marjory, will you come out for a walk? I want to talk with you," he said.

He had never addressed her as Marjory before. She hesitated. Face to face with him, she could hardly make an excuse. She reached her shawl from its nail in the entry, and took her bonnet in her hand.

"I cannot go far," she said. "I have some work to do tonight."

They went down the quiet road. It was almost twilight. The sun had gone down, and the western sky was full of golden and rose-red clouds. The dewy air bathed Marjory's pale face, and touched caressingly her heavy lids that were sore with the last night's crying. Malvern looked at her inquiringly. Her face was like marble, and as unreadable as the stones under his feet.

"Marjory," he said, at last, "why are you going away?"

"The situation I have offered me is a very remunerative one."

"Is that all your reason, Marjory?"

"Well, perhaps your books have made me restless and ambitious."

"For what?"

"Oh, wealth."

"That you can have here. Marjory, stay and be my wife."

A slow red came into her face.

"Why did you say such an idle thing as that?" she asked, after a moment.

"Why do you believe it is idle?" he answered, looking at her.

"It must be. I am very sorry you should think it your duty to propose to me, Mr. Malvern."

"He took no notice of her last words."

"Why must it be, Marjory?"

"A man who takes moonlight drives with a young lady embraced by his arm is hardly free to finish a careless interview with another by proposing, — especially while the former is a guest at his father's house. I assure you there is no need of your offering to marry me, Mr. Malvern. I do not go away with my heart broken on your account."

"Marjory, you are altogether wrong in everything. That young lady is an intimate orphan cousin of mine who has come here as a governess for Siren, and to find a home with us. I do not ask you to marry me from a sense of duty, because I believe I have won your heart, and must not break it, or for any reason but that I love you. And you are in such an incomprehensible mood tonight that I can accept but one solution to the riddle of your manner: that is, that you do care for me."

She looked into his face. Her reckless coolness commenced to give way. He took her hand, beginning to speak again; but she drew back.

"I am poor: you are rich," she said. "I will not marry you."

"I shall curse my riches if you make them an objection!" he exclaimed. "Dear Marjory, do not be so unlike yourself. Have I not proved to you that I love you? What more is there to be said but that you love me? I met you, and took your native nobility for granted, though you were poor: I have tried to show you that I have some, though I am rich. Look at me, and believe me what you know me to be. I am sincere. I love you. Will you be my wife, Marjory, and give the fortunes of yourself and those you love into my keeping?"

She had nothing to give him but poverty and love, and those she gave him.

And so, in spite of threatening circumstances, the course of true love, which had commenced the usual devious course, was made, by the lover's energy, perseverance, and good faith, to run smooth.